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IN THE
SNOW.



IN THE SNOW:

TALES OF
MOUNT ST. BERNARD.

BY

REV. W. H. ANDERDON, M.A.



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LONDON:
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PANCRAS ROAD, E.C.

IE SNOW.

, a spell of severe cold set in
of Italy, and still more in the
the Tyrol and Switzerland. The
divide the sunnier lands of
the German race were buried
falls of snow. Drifted by the
winds, these snow-wreaths became
The only routes by which the
passed at the best of times were
one night. Several parties of
set forth on their passage over
were stayed by a hand more resist-
of man, and driven to congregate
night find refuge. Strange assem-
and there, in hospice, mountain
châlet; people who never had met
likely ever to meet on earth again.
classes and occupations, voyaging

for pleasure or intent on serious cares, with a sprinkling of the guides and cragsmen who win a perilous livelihood by showing the paths over their native mountains, composed these motley groups.

Our present concern is with a party thus gathered under stress of weather in the hospice or reception-house attached to the monastery of the Great Saint Bernard. The barrack-looking edifice had not seldom been taxed to its utmost to accommodate the influx of guests whom some pilgrimage or special occasion had drawn over this grand mountain passage to the south. Well would it have been for other detachments of wanderers, could they have been now safe within its spacious corridors, and in the large guest-hall, where a cheerful fire of pine logs was kept continually blazing. As it was, the “happy family” to which we are to introduce ourselves in their temporary cage consists of the following persons.

First, there is a *milord anglais*; an unpretending English gentleman, quite the gentleman, and thoroughly the Englishman, abhorrent of humbug under every sky, but of foreign humbug above all. A man of large property, with a seat in parliament almost hereditary; for the Enshawes of Enshawe had returned their candidate, time out of mind,

even after the Reform Bill, with a precision worthy of Gatton or Old Sarum. This type of the true aristocratic English gentleman was about the last man on earth who would have aspired, or submitted, to bear any title not lawfully his own. So unambitious a turn, however, does not suit the Italian courier who has undertaken to convey him, and his, to spend the winter in Rome. He bestows on *milord* coronets and titles with a profusion unknown to the Herald's Office, or even to foreign heralds. Sir Robert Enshawe becomes, at every stage, and unconsciously to himself (for he is not well up in continental tongues), a lord of high degree: the degree varying with the difficulty of getting the relay of horses, from count to marquis or duke, envoy extraordinary, ambassador plenipotentiary, the bearer of despatches of the utmost importance, and from any court which the courier may summon to his fancy on the spur of the moment.

Such however as he is, Sir Robert, with his lady, and little daughter Amy of nine years old, together with his wife's niece Miss Dunbar, and with some good principles, a fair allowance of good feeling, and quite an average of narrow hereditary prejudice, is betaking himself across the Alps, to see what the antiques and the Cardinals are like in

Rome. We place him and his belongings first on our list. Precedence is surely due to the owner of two carriages and a *fourgon*, and to the master of the sallow Italian courier aforesaid, a well-fed footman, now for the first time out of England, a valet and lady's-maid,—far greater people in their own estimation than their master and mistress,—not to mention imperials, trunks, packages innumerable, a Foreign-Office passport in his writing-case, and a deputy-lieutenant's uniform in his portmanteau.

Next comes Captain Harris, a cavalry officer on half-pay; who, having seen some service with distinction, unmarried and unattached, is wandering about the world, for lack of a definite object in life. The Captain is still on the sunny side of middle age, with a military and courtly bearing, as all his antecedents warrant; not indolent, though he does nothing; nor exactly a “fine gentleman,” though approaching it within an indefinite shade; certainly with nothing effeminate or listless about him; yet he rather cultivates the manner of a *poco-curante*. He has refinement, and some reading; is pleasant to look on, agreeable to talk to, and disposed, like a man of the world, to make himself at home among people for whom he feels no particular

care. He has fallen in with the “Nabob,” who stands third on our list; and for the present shares with him a neat, well-packed carriage, conveying them not southward, but in the direction of England.

The Nabob is the Captain’s senior by five or six years. He has grown wealthy during his Indian exile, in all but the gift which sweetens every earthly endowment besides. For he has expended no small measure of health in chasing and capturing a large amount of fortune; and he turns towards his native land with habits formed in another climate, fitted for another sphere. It remains to be seen, by those who form his acquaintance when our knowledge of him drops, how far his natural energy, which is considerable, will surmount the task of beginning life again when to most men it is half over. With the lassitude, too, of health half-broken under the sun of India, to be broken still more by every advancing year. Meanwhile, he is a man genial and sociable enough, if you will put up with some of his Indian ways, and a little assumption of Oriental importance. He must smoke his hookah, and have his currie highly seasoned, or all goes wrong. But his black servant, who waits on him with the fidelity of a house-dog

and the submissiveness of a pariah, takes care that in such respects the Saib is kept all right. These essentials secured, the Nabob is voted as among the agreeable ones of the snowed-up party ; and a great friendship is soon established between him and little Amy.

The Fellow of a college in Cambridge, belated on his return to his university tutorship after the Long Vacation, and likely to be rusticated during part of the term already begun, by this snow, that spares neither learned nor simple, is also in the group. A man in early middle life, young for his years, as far as care tends to age one, for he had tasted of it sparingly ; but old-world in many of his ways and not a few of his ideas : with a precision of manner, which intercourse with the world would have worn off. It is the shyness of one who knows how to bear authority within his own sphere, but does not readily find or ascertain his place when thrown into another. In mixed society, he seemed to shrink a little into himself, and was equally far from the self-assertion of the Nabob and from the good-humoured ease of the Captain. He improved, however, on acquaintance. The stiffness of manner melted a good deal under the genial influence of that determination which every-

one manifested to be agreeable. Then, under the surface, appeared a mind cultivated in many departments of knowledge ; though most of them lay out of the track of his companions' every-day acquirements. He had the ancient classics at his fingers' ends ; yet he possessed too much reserve, as well as innate good-taste, to quote the learned languages in mixed company. He had more than an average acquaintance also with the poets of Italy ; he could cap verses from Tasso and Dante, not only with the ladies, but with the next character of our list,

The Italian Improvisatore. So we will call him ; for, like many of his countrymen, he had a gift of facility in stringing verses together, with little or no preparation ; and we shall see him nowise at fault when called on for a story. There was something in the voluble ease and ready self-confidence of the man, as he poured out these effusions, that made up for their shallow and disjointed character. Add to which, a rhetorical manner, an expressive countenance, a voice that could modulate and adapt itself to each varying shade of expression, sufficiently eked out the paucity of matter for the entertainment of the hour. His talent for improvising was not exactly his means of livelihood ; for he gave himself out as a teacher of languages.

But it became more than half suspected, from his acquaintance with the ins and outs of foreign cabinets, that he was a political agent, to say no more. His present chance companions, however, had about as much to do with foreign intrigues as the Improvisatore himself with the game-laws or parliamentary reform. The idea, therefore, which strengthened during their few snowed-up days, that he knew how to report as well as to gather what passed within ear-shot, abated little of the pleasantness of listening to his marvellous facility of speech.

There was an Irishman, who spoke a little shyly of the events in Ireland of '48, but was eloquent upon those of '98, and would not commit himself to the assertion that he was on his way to England. But politics, with controversy, had been banished by common consent from the circle. So the Irishman took rank in it: being agreeable and entertaining, with the easy courtesy of his nation, and the vivacity which allies the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle with the Continent, while it tends to a greater social distance from their silent Saxon neighbours.

There was an old Sea-captain, of the genuine type of British tar; one of the class which perhaps

is only species to the great genus of sea-captains of every country and age, before the march of science made them matter of history, even of fiction. Immortalised by our own English novelists, written about across the Atlantic, hinted at by the classical poets,—though nobody in those days, except the Phœnicians, did anything but “hug the land,”—realised more definitely among the old sea-kings of the Norsemen and Danes, the sea-captain belongs less to any special shore than to the universal ocean. He is a member of the great family that are always afloat, at home on the waste of waters. England, however, the “right little, tight little island,” is rather his birth-place than any other; and Archytas was, no doubt, less of a genuine tar than Captain Cooke. The “old salt” with whom we are now concerned was of a taciturn disposition, as one who found himself thrown somewhat out of his element; he cultivated what Madame de Staël once called “a great talent for silence.” We shall find him contribute his yarn, though briefly, to weave into the varied tissue of general entertainment.

A young English student, who has nearly finished his course of theology in one of the Roman colleges, is returning home for a time invalidated, and

finds place among us now. A quiet, modest youth, with no small perception of fun, disposed to make himself agreeable in an unobtrusive way. He neither forgets his ecclesiastical character, nor forces the remembrance of it unduly on those who differ from him in religion, and on such other subjects as that primary difference involves.

Then there is a Danish merchant, solid and taciturn, with a strong love of country, which is brought at once to the surface when any allusion is made to the customs or traditions of his native land ; otherwise, a man calling for no remark, unless we should pass an encomium on his general inoffensiveness.

Last on the list, because a character less definite than the others, comes one who was quietly inducted into the title of "the man of fifty." He happened, one morning of the few spent together by our party, to announce it as his birth-day, and to add that he had just completed half a century. As this was the most definable thing about him, he half-suggested, and with much good-humour adopted, the designation under which he now completes our catalogue.

It is only just to the community to record, that *the monks of St. Bernard* did their best for the

comfort of these compulsory guests within their hospitable walls. One of their number was deputed by the abbot as “guest-master,” to entertain the strangers; and was chosen for his knowledge of English, as well as of several foreign languages, and for his previous acquaintance with the world. It was elicited from him, almost unawares, that he had served in the Austrian army, and had seen service during some stirring passages of late European events. So frank was he, so simple and courteous, that he greatly won upon the varied group he had to entertain. At length, they pressed him to relate some incidents of his former life. From this, however, he modestly excused himself; alleging that, having left the world, he also desired to leave the memories of it behind. “A monk,” he said, with a good-humoured smile, “is a dead man, who was buried on the day of his religious profession; and you know the proverb, ladies and gentlemen, that ‘dead men tell no tales.’”

“But, now you speak of it,” he continued, “why should not you while away your durance here by reciting some of the remarkable passages of your own lives? Everyone’s life is a mystery, and a miracle of providence and adjustment. ‘Truth is stranger than fiction,’ and I suppose most of us have found

ourselves in circumstances so remarkable that they would fear the incredulity and the laughter that might be their award should they relate them in a book. Here we have," he added, looking round him, "strangers from diverse quarters of the globe, with very various experiences of life, as is not to be doubted; even *la petite Amie*," said he, smiling on Amy Enshawe, "could relate something to which I, for one, would listen with pleasure."

The good monk's idea was favourably received. It was agreed, then, that lots should be drawn for the order of narration; each guest having the choice of reading an original manuscript, or telling an original story.

And so, disposed to enjoy a harmless amusement, they gathered round the cheerful fire, and proceeded to the lottery, which was conducted with great fairness. The Nabob was found in possession of number one; next came the old Sea-captain; after him, Amy; then the Student, the Irishman, the college Fellow, Captain Harris, the man of fifty, Sir Robert, Miss Dunbar, the Danish Merchant, the Improvisatore, Lady Enshawe.

Hereupon, the Nabob was voted by acclama-

tion into the great chair in the middle. Here he had no sooner ensconced himself than he petitioned to be allowed his hookah, without which, he declared, he would be incapable of remembering or detailing any story whatsoever. This being granted by Lady Enshawe, to whom the appeal lay, and the hookah filled and brought by his faithful black attendant, he at once began

The Habob's Tale.

A DILEMMA.

“ You have me at a disadvantage, ladies and gentlemen ; inasmuch as all who follow will have time to remember their choicest anecdotes or most remarkable adventures ; while I am in the position of one ‘ unaccustomed to public speaking,’ yet called on suddenly to address an assembly. Moreover, as you have done me the honour to dub me with an Indian title, you will no doubt expect something of an Indian story. I assure you, I have the greatest difficulty to remember anything in my Oriental career that is worthy of your attention. The life of a civil servant of Great Britain in that vast continent has a sameness like the burning, invariable sky above him, that unfits it to be the material of romance. It is change and shadow, the alternation of mist with sun-burst, *driving storms*, dark November nights, April smiles

and showers, that give poetry and interest, because incident and variety, to this life of ours. Few notable things have happened to me during one-and-twenty years of Indian exile: nor have I carried away with sufficient distinctness any of the absurd Brahminical or Buddhist legends of the natives. Not many personal perils have I encountered. True, I have found one scorpion in my boot, and another in a file of newspapers. A whip-snake once coiled itself round my ankle as I was asleep in my tent. I made a narrower escape from an enraged elephant, by slipping into a passage just wide enough to admit me, into which he thrust his trunk the next moment to pull me out, as we pull out a periwinkle with a pin, and trample me to death under his huge feet. I have had my share of mishaps in boar-hunting, and other such small incidents of Indian life. Most of them are traced very faintly on my remembrance: the rest too trivial to detail. But what say you to a tiger-story, as narrated to me by a friend of mine, whom it befell? How say you, Amy?"

"Oh, yes," said Amy, making large eyes, "I should like a tiger-story of all things; only, don't let him eat anybody up, please don't."

"Well, but," said the Nabob, laughing, "those

are rather hard conditions for a tiger. Happily, the hero of my story ate nobody, though he had the best possible intentions. You shall hear.

"My friend, Major Luscombe, of the Bengal Native Cavalry, was riding home to his quarters late one afternoon from a low, marshy country, where he had been in successful search after the Indian snipe. He was armed only with a double-barrelled gun, charged with small shot ; a weapon about as available against a tiger as a rifle would be against the battery of an iron-clad. Added to which, tigers are not usually shot from horseback, as partridges are in September by elderly gentlemen on quiet shooting-ponies. There was no particular reason, however, to apprehend a meeting with any such ugly customer ; as no tiger had been recently tracked in that part of the district. But you must know that your tiger is a gentleman who will travel his thirty miles a day, or more, with ease ; and this power and habit of locomotion combine with his other qualities to make him the formidable creature he is. You are never secure from a visit which he may condescend to pay your flocks and herds, extending his civilities also to yourself on your evening ride ; and that from a *distance* which even neighbours in the Scottish

Highlands would consider some stretch of friend-
ship to undertake.

"On this particular evening, my friend Lus-
combe was riding up the rather steep pass that
led from the low country to his cantonment,
which was some five miles further up from where
my story finds him. He was in a careless mood,
and rode with his feet out of the stirrups, enjoying
the cool air and the fragrance of his cigar. On
his right, the rock rose abruptly over the road,
fringed with luxuriant Indian shrubs and tall
jungle-grass, which gradually receded into the
larger timber of the forest. The left commanded
an extensive view over the plain, with a winding
river that formed a succession of small lakes, all
golden in the declining sun, from which the road
was shaded. It was a beautiful scene ; one which
I know well, and have often drawn bridle to
enjoy.

"On a sudden, Luscombe's horse, a trained
cavalry charger, not given to needless alarms,
pulled short up, snorted, and bristled with fear.
Luscombe was a really first-rate horseman, and
instantly regained his firm seat, and his stirrups.
Well for him he did so. In the same moment,
looking up, he saw a large tiger crouching in the

jungle-grass some hundred yards before him, and at an elevation over the road that would have brought the beast down upon him in three or four bounds. His horse did not give him time to do more than assure himself that his eyes had not deceived him. He wheeled round, and dashed at full speed down the rocky road, trembling in every limb. It was for Luscombe, in every sense, neck or nothing: the horse under him, and the tiger behind, seemed each to promise him an equal chance of leaving his life there in the pass. As the retina of the eye so often keeps the pictures once impressed on it with intense vividness, so it was that he carried away with him a kind of momentary photograph of the large, tawny, cat-like beast, crouching for his spring; the glare of its green, distended eyes; in his ears was the fierce play of the powerful tail among the grass, which crackled under the operation, as it was swept to and fro.

“But never, in all the break-neck steeple-chases, and other escapades of ‘noble horsemanship’ that had made Luscombe’s name known through the Presidency, did he ride such a race as down the pass that evening. It was, indeed, no act of *volition on his part*; his horse fairly bore him away,

and as he afterwards said to me, an arm of iron would not have held him in. How he escaped breaking his neck, how the horse did not fall, except that both were in the hand of a merciful Providence, he never could tell. A false step would have hurled them over and over like a ball; so desperate was the pace. And in this way, in less time than ever he measured the same extent of ground after a fox across a level country (for Luscombe was a star at Melton, both before and after), he accomplished three or four miles of descent, till he found himself again at the door of the native hut where he had lately taken tiffin after his snipe-shooting.

“Safely arrived there, his first care was to look after his poor horse, who, though he had borne him down unscathed, was in a pitiable condition, lathered with foam, and reeling with terror and fatigue. Having assured himself that his good horse was sound, and having curried him, with aid of the Indians in the hut, Luscombe began to debate with himself the best plan to pursue. A glance at the wasted, fever-stricken forms of the natives before him plainly showed that even the Hindoo constitution could ill resist the *malaria* of this swampy district: and for himself, he well

knew, a night spent on the spot would be certain death. The jungle-fever unfailingly answers a far less decided invitation. His only chance lay in the hills ; and, once taking to the hills, his chief or only safety was the cantonment. The whereabouts of the tiger was a thing no calculation could touch. He might be waiting for him, or he might have moved off. The jungle-fever was a certainty : far less terrible than the tiger ; but then the tiger, though probable, was *uncertain*.

“ Here was a pretty Scylla and Charybdis for poor Luscombe ! He sat for some time balancing one alternative against the other. He felt like a man suddenly caught in a trap, through no fault or imprudence of his own ; and a rising vexation, and even (he afterwards assured me) a strange approach to the ludicrous in his position, took turns in his thoughts. At last, seeing the impossibility of reaching his station by any other way than the pass, and that his chance of escaping with life was less than one to a hundred if he stayed in the plain, he made his decision, like a man of firmness as he was. It needed *all* his firmness, however. He knelt down, and in a fervent prayer commended himself to God ; resigning the event into His hands, *imploring* His protection, and pardon for all the

offences of his life. His next care was for his horse, on whose steadiness and obedience all might depend. He spoke to him, patted his neck, encouraged him with his voice, whistled to him a lively air: then mounted, and turned his head steadily to the road down which he had thundered a short time before.

“I have never made up my mind whether the horse or the dog is the nobler animal, or the more intelligent. Each in his way is worthy the friendship of man. I am sure that Luscombe's good charger was from that day worthy to be ranked among his friends. When he found the direction in which his head was turned by his master's hand, he stood for a moment stock-still, recoiling on his haunches. Gently urged by the spur, he made a strange sort of moan, as though remonstrating against the apparently unreasonable demand that he should face the danger a second time. But when voice and heel convinced him that his rider was in earnest, then the good horse, his ears quivering, and with nostrils inflated to a low snort of terror, began to move slowly up the pass, while the sweat of bodily fear broke out again over his glossy coat. No effort could induce him to quicken his pace *from the nervous, shrinking walk with which he*

commenced his unwilling march. And so, with a sharp look-out, quickening in intensity as they neared the dreaded spot, horse and rider stole up the pass again.

“There are moments in the life of man that go like years : moments of a stretch of mind so high-strung and painful, that existence is measured by intensity of feeling, not by lapse of time. Another friend of mine, who distinguished himself in the Crimea, acknowledged to me that in the trenches before Sebastopol he has thought the day would never be over : looked at his watch and found it was still morning. Expectation of death at any moment from shell or bayonet, with little to do but to stay there and expect it, must interfere with the day slipping away easily. I daresay, Harris, you have known something of the kind?”

“Certainly,” returned the Captain ; “no shame in confessing that much. Once in the thick of it, one loses all feeling except the high excitement of the moment, that brings its positive sense of pleasure ; or if not that, I know not how to define it. But the silence and waiting before is another thing. Marching up at night, for instance, to occupyt he ground for the following morning.”

“And so Campbell,” edged in the college Fel-

low, "is true to the nature even of the brave when he gives you Nelson's squadron moving up the channel towards Copenhagen, before the guns opened fire : when

‘As they drifted on their path,
There was silence, deep as death,
And the bravest held his breath
For a time.’”

"Come," said the Captain, whose fastidious horror of talking shop, or fighting his battles o'er again, never let the conversation turn on gunpowder, if he could help it, "we are losing sight of your tiger."

"I am happy to tell you," answered the Nabob, "that was precisely what Luscombe did too."

"Lost sight of him?" asked Amy eagerly.

"Yes. When his horse had dragged him, with feet of lead, up to the turn of the road where the tiger ought to have been visible, and Luscombe, keeping his eyes fixed on that bush-grown rock, that had been, as it were, *burnt* into his brain, had brought the whole scene into the focus of one intense glance—the tiger was gone."

At this conclusion of the first story the audience seemed, on the whole, disappointed that their suspense had terminated in a *finale* which was safe, indeed, to the person chiefly concerned, but in itself a little tame. Travellers, it must be remembered, live in a round of excitement, and are continually hearing of things strange, thrilling, and horrible, at least in the past. They see in picture-galleries vivid representations of sanguinary deaths; they visit torture-chambers in old fortresses; they listen to the wild legends of forest, precipice, avalanche, or cave, till the appetite for the marvellous and the *sensational* grows under these stimulants, and the quieter ways of life are voted to be, like the Nabob's story, rather a lame and impotent conclusion.

It was hoped, therefore, that the old Sea-captain, who stood next on the list, would contribute a more stirring narrative: though, indeed, neither his appearance nor his mode of beginning seemed to promise very much of interest.

Thus, for better or worse, he began to spin

The old Sea-Captain's Yarn.

A SHOT FOR THE DEAR LIFE.

“ My brief story,” he began, “ is concerned with the time when the first Napoleon declared war against England. I am not going to spin a yarn upon the war in general, or on the politics of that day, but keep on my own tack, and so run to port. Enough to say, that on the first outbreak, and as if by magic, the West Indian passage swarmed with French privateers. I commanded a merchantman on that line for a well-known Liverpool firm of proprietors and estate-agents (for my employers were both), who did business, and farmed their own plantations, chiefly in Barbadoes and St. Kitt’s. Besides the command of the merchant brig, the Thomas Simpson, I had my own share of ownership in the vessel ; a certain proportion, too, of the rums and sugars I was bringing home was mine. I had embarked all I was worth in the world in this particular *run*; for, if it proved successful, it was

to be followed by my taking to wife a young lady to whom I had been long engaged, and who had waited for such time as the struggles and chances of a merchant seaman's life should allow of my offering her a humble home.

"You may judge, then, of my feelings when, about the middle of our passage homeward, one hazy afternoon, while there was hardly a breath stirring, the man in the top sung out that we had a sail to windward of us. My very first thought was that she was more than likely a privateer. As I sprang into the shrouds with my glass, I will own to some thumpings of heart that were not exactly fear, but a mixture of feelings, into which thoughts of death, capture, loss of vessel and cargo, and Sarah Wilson, who was waiting for me in England, largely entered.

"When I had brought my glass to bear, I made out the indistinct shape of an ugly, rakish-looking craft (I mean, with masts raking more than an honest vessel should), that was edging towards us on our weather-beam. Having the wind of us, though the wind was little enough, she sighted us through the haze better than we could sight her. She was the lighter craft of the two, by a good *deal*, and came on upon the wind much faster than

we liked ; every minute brought her nearer, and every sight I got of her convinced me the more that she had wicked intentions.

“ There was not much time to lose. I at once assembled the crew and the passengers on my quarter-deck, and announced my determination to fight the stranger, if she stood on her present tack five minutes longer. There was some little difference of opinion among them as to the wisdom of this resolution ; and I confess, at my present time of life I could hardly have advised such a course. We were but ill found either in men or weapons. Our available defences were only two short carronades, with a sprinkling of muskets and cutlasses ; while my crew consisted of seventeen able-bodied men, two cabin-boys, who counted for next to nothing, and six passengers, beside ladies and children. On the other hand, it was not to be doubted that the privateer was crowded chock-full with ruffians. But such was the horror of a French prison, or of the still worse fate we might expect at the hands of desperadoes and pirates (for a privateer was often little better), that the most peaceably disposed of the passengers, even, was nerved by a courage he might not at all times possess.

"So the thing was settled in a trice, and the arms, as far as they went, taken out of the arm-chest and distributed. Even the cabin-boys had a brace of pistols apiece, though perhaps they had never fired one in their lives. As to the carronades, they were always kept ready for action.

"The ladies and children were handed down into the hold, which, after all, was the most distressing part of the business. However, they behaved well; and there was less crying and leave-taking than might have been expected. The suddenness of our danger saved us a good deal of that sort of thing.

"The worst of our prospects was the calm weather under which we were almost lying-to. It gave an advantage to the lighter craft, for we made out she was a schooner-rigged thing; and besides, when we were all at our posts, having managed what we could to make a defence against being boarded by tricing up the hammock-nettings and what not, we found she had got out her *sweeps*, or large oars, each worked by three or four men, to get at us the quicker. We could hear them creaking in the thwarts, and their dash in the calm water.

"*Oh, how our men whistled for a wind!* and

those who had been at all used to pray I daresay prayed for it too. It was our only chance. To lie there on the water was almost to lie at the mercy of our enemy ; and several times I began to doubt the resolution I had taken to fight her. But anything was better than to surrender without resistance into the hands of privateers. I hardly know what desperate act I might have been led to at the moment. I think, if I had had powder enough on board, I should have been almost capable of blowing up the ship rather than see those rascals haul down the Union Jack I had set flying, or rather drooping, at the jib-boom.

“We were all at our posts ; some looked at each other, some examined their arms, some strained their eyes into the haze, out of which came, clearer every moment, the outlines of the wicked-looking craft that carried our fate ; more and more distinctly sounded the dash of her long sweeps into the heaving water.

“But another sound came too, and struck joyfully on our ears ; it was the rattling of our ropes on the masts, and a heavy flap or two of our sails. There was a puff of air getting up ! The flag began to flutter at the jib. All was not lost yet !

“*The whistlers whistled more keen than ever,*

and if any prayed, I am sure they prayed with all their souls. Yes, there was the unmistakable breeze ! It began to fill the sails, everything aboard having been set to catch it. The Thomas Simpson made her best bow to her enemy, and like a tight thing as she was, made way at once across the waters.

“ The privateer felt it no less : and those who were on board of her saw their chance of securing us diminishing in a like proportion. Their object now was to cripple us by damaging our sails. Accordingly, they ceased working the sweeps, and luffed up enough to bring her bow-chasers to bear on us. They were crack marksmen, it must be said for them ; and when they let fly, with chain-shot and other thievish things they loaded with, they made havoc among our sheets and rigging.

“ All this time, the wind was getting up so fast, I began to think we were going to have one of the sudden hurricanes of the tropics. It blew aside, like a curtain, the haze that had still partly hidden the privateer ; and there she was, steering again right for us, with some fifty men crowding her narrow deck. We could see them getting ready to board, plain enough, at every pitch she gave ; for there was now a good deal of motion on both

vessels, and the sea began to run high. So high indeed, there was not much firing to be done; and I began to hope the privateer would not be able to attempt boarding us when she got near enough to grapple.

"Now, boys!" cried I, as a sudden thought shot into my head, "we'll fire a double-barrel into that rookery, and bring down some of those ill-omened birds!" With that, I ordered our two carronades to be loaded chock-full with grape and canister. I was determined to give our neighbours a full benefit of all I had. "If the guns *do* burst," thought I, "it is only sending us out of the world a little sooner; for *now*, I am sure, those fellows will give no quarter. Better be blown over the taffrail by our own guns in lawful defence of our lives, than walk the plank, or swing at the yard-arm of yon thievish Mounseer."

"It was quickly done. Such a charge, I suppose, few guns ever carried, before or since; and had they not been tough metal, I should not have been here to tell the story. I knelt on the deck, with my eye along the carronade, waiting till a heave should expose the deck of the privateer. The gunner stood over me, the lighted match in his hand. I bade him fire the instant I gave the

word ; for the motion of the two vessels was now violent—all depended on quickness ;—and it was not easy to calculate between the two movements combined. In half a minute a large wave was rolling towards the privateer. ‘Now, gentlemen,’ thought I, ‘this carries your fate !’ It struck her amidships, lifted her long black side, then rolled forward. It tossed her bows high in the air ; then she began to settle into the trough of the sea. Another moment, and all her deck would lie exposed. At that moment, could I bring the gun to bear ? Would the wave, which came along at a great pace, strike us before then, and send all my charge into the air, or into the sea ? Little time to think, but the thoughts came quick as lightning. The privateer’s bows went down souse into the water ; all her deck lay before me. ‘Fire !’ cried I ; and at that moment the report of the carronade stunned me. The recoil of the piece knocked me backwards on the deck. I did not hear the first cry of rage and surprise on board the enemy ; but, when I had in some degree recovered my hearing, I could still distinguish the shrieks of the wounded. There must have been a great many of them hit, for the aim was good, though I shouldn’t boast ; and, of

course, the short gun scattered a good deal. At all events, it wasn't for want of ammunition.

"In spite of all she had got, the privateer held right on for us. If they had been wise, they would have luffed again, and kept up their fire, in which case they might have crippled us in the long-run, out of the reach of our carronades. But it seems they were maddened with rage at the loss they had sustained ; and nothing would satisfy their captain but to board us as soon as ever he could, and put us all to the sword.

"'Well,' thought I, 'if you feel you have not had enough, I must do my best to give you some more ;' and, to be brief, I played the same game over again with the other carronade ; ordering the gunner, meanwhile, to load the first as full as before. I would not trust the aim to any eye but my own, though my shoulder felt as if the recoil of the piece had knocked it out of the socket. There was too much at stake for me, and for all, in every shot ; and, as shore-going people would say, it was neck or nothing.

"Luck was on the honest side in the second shot too ; or rather, we were blest by a merciful Providence who rules the winds and waters. I have often thought of it since, and wondered at the

favourable conjunction of things at those two moments, that enabled me again and again, under a stiff breeze, now almost a gale of wind, to fire into the privateer when her deck was exposed, and our own was level. This, you will see, was a special mercy, if you calculate how many chances there were against it. Enough to say, my second gun, crammed almost to the mouth, and nearly as dangerous to us as to the enemy, did such execution on the privateer, she being now close to us, that she had fairly got enough of it. In short, she wore round, and stood off as well as she could, sullenly, and much disabled from loss of men.

"Now came the question—Prudence or Revenge? Should we chase the chaser, and do our best to capture her, and tow her into the Mersey in triumph? I confess, my own impulse at the moment was to try it; but I was over-ruled by the passengers, who insisted that I had no right to trifle with their safety, nor that of the ship entrusted to me. They had behaved so well during the danger, and the plea itself was so reasonable, that I yielded, though much against the grain. On the whole, I should not have had much chance in sailing after so fast a craft; for in every tack on the *wind*, she made some four knots to our three. So

ran up another union-jack to our main, by way of triumph, and did no more than shake my fist after, as she cheered off. Just then, a sail hove in sight, which proved to be another West Indiaman, and made the privateer crowd all sail to get away.

"Nine days after, we cast anchor in the Mersey, and I went ashore with my arm in a sling, to report the ship to my employers. They complimented me in the handsomest manner on the way in which I had saved their vessel and cargo. Nor did they confine their gratitude to words ; but tendered to me a liberal slice out of the proceeds of the voyage, which had been a profitable one. Now and then, when the weather changes, my shoulder still reminds me of this event in my life. So, likewise, does the former Miss Wilson, who changed her name for mine about six weeks after my return ; and whose temper, I am happy to inform you, does not change with the weather."

At this point it may be well to state that, whereas the unities of *place* are strictly secured to us by the snow-storms without the hospice, to those of *time* a proportionate indulgence is to be given.

The reader is therefore left at liberty to decide whether the imprisonment of our various narrators was protracted to three days or four ; and whether Amy's contribution to the common stock was given the same evening, or the evening after, that of her friend the Nabob.

For it was now Amy's turn to tell her story ; and she began it at once, with much eagerness, addressing herself to the Nabob chiefly. Either she was too young to be shy, or it did not happen to be her tendency. In either case, and whatever defects might attach to her contribution, it neither required encouragement to elicit it, nor did it "hang fire" in the progress.

The Child's Tale.

THE WICKED FAIRY.

“ONCE upon a time, there lived a beautiful young princess. And she was quite a little girl, you know. And her papa and mamma were the king and queen. And they lived in a beautiful palace, and there was a lake by the side of it, all full of gold and silver fishes. And everything about the palace was gold and silver ; even the combs they combed out the horses’ manes with were silver combs : but the horses were cream-colour. Only, you know, the princess’s pony was dappled red and white, just like a dear little fawn in our park at home, and the side-saddle was blue velvet, all over silver and pearl embroidery. And she had a great many lady’s-maids to wait upon her : oh, I can’t tell you how many. And they had nothing else to do, only to wait on her. And she had such a dear little boat on the lake, that went so fast, *so fast!* *It was all* carved in ivory and polished

wood, like papa's sideboard at home. And it was drawn by two white swans, harnessed with blue twist, and clasps of gold. But the princess was never allowed to row it, of course; only to fish out of it. And she had a little net all made of gold twist, for she never would fish with a hook, you know; that would have hurt the fishes' mouths, wouldn't it? And then, oh, the poor worm that naughty boys put all alive on a hook—she never could have done that, you know. I should have hated her if she had done that. Wouldn't you? And I never would have told you a story about her at all, if she had been so cruel as that. And you wouldn't care to hear it, would you, now?

"Oh, but I forgot to tell you there was a wicked old fairy who lived at the bottom of the lake—at the very, very bottom of it. And she was such a spiteful old thing. You can't think how spiteful she was. Only think, she envied the princess because she was so beautiful, and because she was so good. Did I tell you the old fairy was very ugly? Yes, I think I told you that. So she envied her for both; only think. And she said to herself: 'I'll try and get the princess down to the bottom of the lake, and change her into a fish.' Into a fish! Ha, ha! *did you ever hear of a little girl being changed into*

a fish? Well, that's what she said, though. And she meant it too. You'll see in a moment if she didn't. So she called a bad kind of spirit that waited on her; I don't know what kind of a spirit it was, only very wicked and very ugly, like the old witch herself. Shall I say fairy or witch? I like fairy best; which do you like best? Well, let us say fairy. So she touched this bad sort of spirit with a wand she had—a long black wand, that would turn people into other shapes. So when she touched the spirit with this, it took the shape of a fish, with scales all over like gold and pearl. And she told it to swim, and swim, up to the top of the lake. And she told it all she wanted it to do. How wicked! wasn't it? So this wicked spirit swam, and swam, till he came to the top of the lake, where the princess was fishing with her gold net. And she caught it easily, you know; for the make-believe fish wished itself to be caught. Oh, how glad the princess was when she got such a beautiful fish into her net! But she only used to fish that she might look at the fishes, you know, and give them crumbs of cake, and let them go again. She wouldn't kill them for the world. But I wonder what made the old fairy able to turn such a wicked *spirit* into such a beautiful fish. Do you

know? Tell me now, *do you?* I thought wicked people were always ugly. Nurse, at home, told me if I was naughty, I should have a long red nose. Perhaps the fish had a long red nose, for all its beautiful gold scales. A fish with a nose! Ha, ha! Well, the fish got into the net, and then he began to talk. Oh, how surprised the princess must have been to hear the fish talk to her! And he told her a great many nice things; at least, they sounded nice, but there wasn't a word of them true. He told her, you know, what a beautiful place the bottom of the lake was, where he came from; and that if she went down there, she would have the fishes all playing round her—much larger fishes, and more shiny, than any that came to the top: how the coral grew into large trees, and how there were gardens of sea-weed—red, and green, and yellow, like dahlias, and tulips, and roses, and a great many sea-anemones and star-fish besides. The fish told her she should have a little boat made all of mother-of-pearl, drawn by six large gold-fishes; and oh, I don't know what besides. And she was to have all these nice things, if she would jump out of the boat, and come with the fish to the bottom of the lake.

“*Don't you think the princess was very silly?*

But you haven't heard yet. Well, she began to think, and think, about all the fish had told her ; that is, the make-believe fish, I mean. How much she would like to have all these gold-fishes swimming about, coming to feed out of her hand, and to walk through the woods of coral and bright sea-weeds, and to get into a pearl boat, and be drawn by gold-fishes. But then she remembered that her mamma—that is, the queen, you know—had bid her never lean, even, over the side of the boat she was in : and if she wasn't to lean over, how could she jump in ? That would be disobedience, wouldn't it ? So she went on thinking, and the fish went on talking ; and he seemed to talk so nicely, at last he over-persuaded her. But she oughtn't to have listened at first, ought she ? Not when a thing is wrong, of course, you know.

"So the princess thought and thought, and the fish talked and talked, till at last nothing would content her but she must see all those wonderful things at the bottom of the lake. So all her mamma had said went for nothing at the moment, and she shut her eyes, and put her hands over them, and jumped head first out of the boat, and sank down at once to the bottom. On which all the *fishes* (*oh, I forgot to tell you, they were all*

bad spirits, every one of them) set up a great laugh that frightened her out of her wits.

"So when the princess came to the bottom of the lake, the wicked old fairy got up from where she was sitting, on a great big throne all made of mother-of-pearl—"

"Well, but, Amy," said Amy's mother, "suppose we leave the old fairy sitting on her throne for the present, and you go to bed?"

A general petition here arose that Amy might have an extension of leave, and sit up till she had finished her story. The snoring of the Danish merchant, however, betokened *one* at least who was indifferent to the story. But Amy went on courageously:

"Well, it's almost over now. So the wicked old fairy got up from her throne, and took some water in her hand, and was just going to throw it over the young princess—"

"Wait a moment," said the Nabob, laughing: "how could she throw water over the princess when they were all together already at the bottom of the lake? That would be carrying coals to Newcastle, wouldn't it?"

Poor Amy looked rather puzzled at this sudden difficulty, and sat thinking, with her eyes fixed on the Nabob.

"I suppose," suggested the man of fifty, to help her out, "she could do all that, because she was a fairy."

"No, that wasn't it," answered Amy, in much distress; "that wasn't it at all. Dear me! Oh," she said, brightening up, "it must have been like the children I saw at Hastings, who came out of two bathing-machines; and they were all in the water, and splashed each other out of fun."

Having settled the point so, Amy proceeded to wind up her narrative.

"So the wicked old fairy was just going to splash the princess all over with water, to turn her into a fish; but her poor mamma (that's the queen, you know) was crying her eyes out, in her palace by the side of the lake. And she prayed, of course, you know, that her little girl, the princess, might be saved out of the lake. For they saw all that happened, from the windows; they saw the fish come up, and talk to her and persuade her, though they could not hear what it said."

"What language did the fish speak?" asked the Nabob gravely, with a slow puff of his hookah.

"I believe I must come to the rescue," said Lady Enshawe, "or we shall never get to the end of Amy's story."

"Like the queen from the palace window," answered the Nabob, with a bow. "Well, Amy, of course the queen sent for the king, you know, where he was, 'in his counting-house, counting out his money,' and the king sent for the honorary Secretary of the Humane Society, with his diving-bell—"

"Indeed, he did no such thing," said Amy, quite put out. "He sent to beg a good fairy to come—"

"And she came in the shape of the little girl's maid," persisted Lady Enshawe, making a sign to that functionary, who now appeared at the door; "and they put the little princess into her mother-of-pearl bed, that she mightn't catch cold after being under water so long."

"And they all lived very happy afterwards," added Sir Robert. "Good-night, Amy, my child; and don't dream of talking fishes."

With whatever difference of age, the Student was the next youngest to Amy in the whole party. But there was every contrast between the child's *assurance* and unreflecting confidence in telling her

story before her elders, and the embarrassment with which, when it came to the point, he addressed himself to his task. Apologising for the paucity of material involved in the sameness of his life in a church seminary, he began his tale, rather as though he would not fail in what was expected of him, than as one who anticipated securing much interest among his hearers.

The Student's Legend.

THE RECTOR OF SHROPTON.

“My native village, Shropton in Bedfordshire, is one of the retired nooks of England, with an old parish church, and a rectory adjoining. This rectory stands on the site and is built from part of the ruins of a small Augustinian house of Canons in the old time. A straggling street of houses for the yeoman class, quaint, heavy-timbered, and picturesque, of some four hundred years ago, leads up to the *lych-gate*, or rude porch, at the entrance of the churchyard, over which the rooks are cawing perpetually, and under shelter of which the funerals used to wait for the priest and the holy water, and now wait for the rector and his umbrella. The old, half-cracked bells that toll for the dead, and ring out for weddings, and chime for service on Sundays, have hung in the moss-grown tower since the days of Henry VII. *at least.* Once, when I was bent on the freak, I

borrowed the use of a ladder from a neighbouring farmer, who was thatching his ricks in harvest-time, and managed to scale up the face of the church-tower, and creep in by a small window, or loop-hole, in the belfry. There, in the midst of the dark and smother, pushing my way among jack-daws' nests of many generations, I could trace with my finger on the rim of the oldest bell of the three, an inscription in raised letters, which, by dint of some guessing, I made out to be,

Xts vincit, Xts regnat, Xts imperat
on the second,

Salve Regina Misericordiae

and on the third,

A fulgere et tempestate libera nos Domine.

“Inside, the church is a quaint old place, with more memories of the past than are to be found in most parish churches in that part of England. There is a tomb to the memory of Sir Thomas de Wyveringham, under a low arch on the north side of the chancel; dusty and defaced, yet with some remains of its ancient splendour. The good knight is lying without nose or feet, but the material of effigy and altar-tomb is of good Derbyshire alabaster. The armorial bearings, too, are distinctly

traceable on the panels, though they have all but perished from the tattered, faded banner that wavers above the tomb with every gust from the ill-fitting chancel windows. Then, in what was once the south chantry, and is now the Squire's pew, are the remains of an old confessional, the sliding panel of which you can still feel through the red-baize, lining the comfortable apartment, with hassocks and stove, where the Styles family transact their public worship. And right in front of the communion-table is let into the floor an old black slab of Purbeck marble, once the altar-stone, now placed, by royal authority, where every passer-by, from the woman who cleans the church up to the rector, must needs tread on it.

“ If these details, ladies and gentlemen, are tedious to you, I must claim forgiveness by begging you to recall the scenes of your own childhood. The deep though casual impressions made on us in our early days remain uneffaced, so elder people say, under the stormiest sweep of after-emotions and sufferings. I have not yet known many such. Yet I can well believe that, whatever may lie before me, and if I shall attain to what I hope for, and persevere in it, nothing will efface from my remembrance the old parish church

of Shropshire, and the sundry and divers antiquities I have mentioned."

Hereupon his audience begged him to be under no concern about becoming tedious. A story, they said, that had *truth* in it, however much confined to the commonplace, had an advantage over more dubious though romantic narratives. Thus encouraged, the young Student modestly went on.

"What I have hitherto narrated," said he, "is nothing very much out of the way. As to what follows, let it be taken with that degree of credit which may be due to the testimony that supports it. A thing being wonderful, and beyond the range of our own experience, is not therefore to be rejected as untruly stated by others, unless it be in itself impossible, or the witnesses for it really questionable. On this point, perhaps, I may quote a historian, who, though he lived as early as Henry II., was certainly not over-credulous; a sturdy Welshman, given to be somewhat sceptical in matters of pure historic belief: I mean, *Giraldus Cambrensis*. After relating a story told to him of a boy in Ireland, who had made his way into fairy-land, and, at the end of some years, came out again, he quotes Saint Augustin's words, as regards the marvellous in general—"

Here the Danish merchant showed signs of uneasiness, and begged to corroborate the possibility of fairy-land by an anecdote relating to the *Kobolds* of his own country, with other matters of Scandinavian belief. But the more easily disposed the Student was to resign his right of speech, the more determined became the greater part of the company that he should be heard out ; and silence was restored, a little peremptorily, by the Squire and the Nabob.

“I must first,” continued the Student, “give some little account of the persons who in succession, though with very different tenets of belief, ministered to the flock in Shropton from the day when Sir Thomas de Wyveringham was gathered to his fathers. That good knight died, as we read on his tombstone, in the year 1494, and, of course, before any religious change had come over the face of England. The land was Catholic and feudal. The lords of Wyveringham, from father to son, including old Sir Guy and his grandson Sir Roger, who both took the cross and went to the holy wars (the latter leaving his very bones in Palestine), were noted for their religious attachment to the faith. So, when the last hour of Sir Thomas was come, the family chronicle records

as prior of the Augustinian Canons, with all community, intoned the death-psalms round strewn couch, and with Mass and solemn commended his departing soul.

Now this same Sir Thomas (as you will read gdale) had charged some of his lands in on to furnish in perpetuity a stipend for a priest to say Mass for himself and his back to the Conquest. The deed convey- gift contained solemn denunciations against to should divert the funds so assigned to purposes ; and concluded by imploring the who was to be maintained by it to let none urgent reason prevent his saying Mass daily intention ; and, in saying it, to have regard great needs of the departed, who cannot help selves. ‘Forasmuch,’ runs the document, hile we are in life, we may do and merit for our own souls and others’ ; but when we ce, then ceaseth all action and merit alike.’ n process of time came the change of religion, h which you will not expect me to trace the rectors very minutely. The Augustinian mon- of Shropton, being a small community, fell a to the first suppression of religious houses Henry VIII. The dispersed monks found

refuge, some in larger communities of their order in England, some beyond the seas. A few of them returned to the world. The altar of Shropton was served, meanwhile, by a ‘parson,’ or secular parish priest. This change from regular clergy to secular involved, of course, no change in doctrine or discipline in the parish. Mass was said regularly in Shropton church; though the black cowl of the Augustinians was no longer seen over the chasuble at Mass. The ‘parson’ was as much bound to celibacy, and to recite the daily canonical hours, as the monks whom he had superseded. England had not yet broken away from the faith.

“But the hour came, over which I had rather hasten than dwell. The altar was torn down, and the consecrated slab placed, as I have said, of malice prepense, where every foot must spurn it afresh. The communion-table of the new rite was set lengthways in the midst of the chancel, after the Geneva usage; afterwards, in the days of Elizabeth, as though to render the usurpation complete, it was made to occupy the place whence the altar had been overthrown. The scandal and horror of the parish may be imagined. Several of the stout Shropton yeomen had joined the northern risings, *especially the ‘Pilgrimage of Grace’*; and though

many of these insurgents had returned to their homes on the proclamation of a general pardon, others had left their lives as pledges of their sincerity, having been hanged—some at Carlisle, some at York. In short, whatever might be happening at court, the mass of the inhabitants of that part of the country, in common with the rest of England, were firmly attached to the old faith. In the dispossessed and exiled monks they had lost their best friends: equitable landlords, benefactors whose daily dole at the convent-gate relieved their poor; educators of their youth, as well as ministers of their religion. But what did they say when, on the accession of Edward VI., an illiterate man, formerly an artisan in the neighbouring town of Biggleswade, with his wife and children, came down among them with all the authority the Lord Protector Somerset could bestow, ‘read himself in’ to Shrop-ton church by the forms of the new Prayer-book, and established his family in whatever portions of the adjoining monastery were still habitable?

“The religious history of England, from that day downwards, involves also the chronicles of the rectors of Shrop-ton. It is better known to you, ladies and gentlemen, than it is likely to be to myself. *Let me, then, make a single step from the*

day when Mass ceased in the old parish church, by royal decree, down to a certain year, nearer to our own times, when the long reign of George III. was drawing to a close.

"One Sunday afternoon, then, late in autumn, the day had been unusually dark, and the rector's sermon unusually dull. A poor old woman, who had walked a considerable distance from her lone cottage to church, fell fast asleep in a corner of one of the high pews, and remained there unnoticed by the congregation, who dispersed and hurried home under a pelting rain. When at length poor old Betty awoke, the church door had been locked more than an hour; all was pitch dark, and silent as the graves around. She was in terror at finding herself locked up in the church alone; all the stories of hobgoblins that were rife in the village rushed into her mind, as she sat bemoaning herself on a hassock in the chancel. As night drew on, the clouds became broken, and a stray gleam of moonlight struggled in through the ivy that grew over the chancel windows. It touched the monument of old Sir Thomas de Wyveringham, and played on the marble features of the good knight's effigy, till you might almost think the closed eyes were opening, and the cold lips parting to emit a

hollow voice from the tomb. Bats began to flit through the building with their shrill squeak ; an owl hooted at intervals from the old tower ; and the church clock, with a hard inexorable pant, sounded like the pulse of time, ‘unhasting, undelaying,’ to deliver in its record of human doings to eternity. It was a combination of awful thoughts and solemn sounds that was too much for the poor old woman, who, drawing her cloak over her head, and burying her face in her hands, remained seated without daring to move, till, for very exhaustion, she slept again.

“Several times, when the grim old clock tolled out the hour, Betty started from her sleep, and looked fearfully round her. All, however, was quiet : the only light was the faint moonbeam that travelled over the broken chancel floor ; and the monotonous panting of the church clock was the only sound. At length she retired again into the high pew, and sank into a sleep so profound, that it was only the repeated stroke of midnight that aroused her. Then she rubbed her eyes indeed, to find the church bright with a steady light that proceeded from the chancel. It streamed upward to the rafters, caught their faded gilding, and *threw the outlines* and mullions of the win-

dows into strong relief. But all was as silent as before.

“ Awed and astonished, old Betty raised her head cautiously over the top of the pew, and gazed into the chancel. All was changed. The little squat communion-table, with its puffy velvet cushions, had disappeared ; in its place stood a Catholic altar, surmounted by elaborate panelings, richly coloured and gilt. Silver images of saints, and numerous reliquaries, were interspersed with the massive candlesticks of the same material on a ledge that rose above the altar-table. From its centre ascended towards the roof a tabernacle in alabaster, of delicate tracery, in front of which stood a crucifix, burnished and gemmed.

“ Betty, with open eyes, had hardly time to take in these wonders, and the last iron stroke of twelve still vibrated in the church tower, when from the vestry door glided the form of a man, clad in such garments as were a mystery to his involuntary companion. The rector would have recognised them, from an old missal in his study, as those of a Catholic priest vested for Mass. Their hue was of the deepest sable, as of one who was prepared to say Mass for the dead. But the old woman’s *horror-struck* attention was riveted on the counten-

ance of the new-comer, which was of a death-like pallor, and worn with traces of an indescribable suffering. Slowly he issued from the vestry, bearing the chalice under its sable pall. He looked round him, without seeming to notice that he was observed ; a deep sigh came from his ghost-like lips, and he shook his head, as one who sorrowed to find himself alone. Then he slowly ascended the steps, arranged the chalice, opened the missal that stood on the altar, descended again, and remained with hands joined, his face toward the tabernacle. He paused thus for several minutes, during which the poor old woman scarcely dared to breathe.

“ At length a hollow sepulchral voice came from his lips ; yet with a touching earnestness, that rose into a tone of entreaty :

‘ *Is there no one here who will serve my Mass ?* ’

“ A dead silence followed. It was at length broken by another long-drawn sigh. Then, with a tone of more agonised pleading, the spectral priest repeated his question :

‘ *Is there no one here who will have the charity to serve my Mass ?* ’

“ On receiving no answer, the priest heaved another sigh, which seemed drawn from the very depths of his chest, and again shook his head.

Then, after a longer pause, came the question a third time, in a tone of the most acute suffering that could be thrown into human accents :

'Is there indeed no one here who will have the charity to serve an unhappy sinner's Mass ?'

"No answer being returned, the spectre heaved sigh after sigh, mingled with moans and the sounds of stifled weeping : ascended the altar steps again, closed the missal, took up the chalice, came down, stood another moment looking round him, shook his head, sighed once more, and glided back into the vestry.

"At the same moment the altar lights burned dim, and then expired ; the rich panellings faded on the patched and whitewashed wall ; the silver ceased to gleam, and the altar melted into the fusty velvet of the table with its cushions. Nothing was to be seen but the ray of moonlight that still lit up the marble features of the effigy ; nothing heard but the hard panting of the clock in the church tower.

"How the old woman got through the rest of that night she never could say. Whether she slept or swooned after all she had seen, certain it is that the sexton, coming in early next morning for his tools to dig a grave, roused her from a stupor in *the corner of the high pew*. The story, of course,

flew like wild-fire through the village and neighbourhood; but in all the cross-questioning to which she was subjected, she never varied in any detail. The rector, the squire, and a retired attorney who occupied the third-best house and pew in Shrop-ton, and made himself busy in all local affairs, resolved themselves into a committee on the subject ; but after a searching inquiry, they arrived at the conclusion that the old woman had been babbling her dreams.

“ Now, there chanced to be lodging in a village a few miles from Shrop-ton an Irish labourer, who had come over from Tipperary to find a job in the harvesting. He, among others, heard this strange story told one day in an ale-house ; but, unlike the rest, he seemed to have some clue to its meaning. ‘Ochone,’ thought he, ‘I’ll be bound ’tis the sowl of some poor priest that had left out reading his Mass, or maybe has read it in a careless way he’s now sorrowing over ; and ’tis myself will go try an’ help him out of the scrape he’s in. Musha, if he’s no one else to serve his Mass, here’s Mick O’Flaherty to the fore.’

“ Mick, I must tell you, though at that time far away from any opportunity of practising his religion, and *not the most devout* of Catholics at any time,

had never lost one jot or particle of his faith. He had been used as a boy to serve the daily Mass of the parish priest in his native village ; and though it had always been a substantial priest of flesh and blood, yet he reasoned that to serve the ghost of a priest at Mass could not differ very much from serving Father Larry, who was a stout man full six feet high.

“So, fortifying himself with his good intentions, O’Flaherty contrived to slip unobserved into the church the following Sunday afternoon. He concealed himself in a high pew belonging to an eccentric old man who lived in a neighbouring manor, and seldom if ever darkened the door of a place of worship. Here he stayed through all the service, sat out the sermon, heard the congregation disperse, and the sexton lock the doors. His courage rather failed him when he found himself really alone in the deepening twilight—alone with a ghost ! and on his own invitation too ! It was a grave position of things. However, between the supper he had brought and a minute survey round the church, with some occasional prayers, the time of waiting passed gradually by. Among other precautions, Dick was careful to try the vestry door, through which the old woman had declared she had seen

the ghost glide into the chancel. He found it fast locked, as it always was after the service. It was a small old door, but very massive, studded with large nails and furnished with a ponderous lock, which might have been made by Sir Thomas de Wyveringham's armourer in the olden time. The key, after locking the door, was always taken by the sexton to the rectory and laid on the rector's study table.

“Throb after throb, the old clock in the church tower told round the pulse of the heavy hours; clang after clang went the bell, till it reached nine—ten—eleven. When that last hour had struck, O’Flaherty’s heart out-throbbed the church clock. Another hour would now bring him face to face with the supernatural. Mick had a lion’s heart for all dangers belonging to earth; and would have charged with the Irish Brigade at Fontenoy, or the Enniskilleners at Waterloo, without a thought of fear. But here was something to be met, against which no mere earthly courage would avail; and he never made any secret of it afterwards—he would have given all he possessed (no very magnificent offer) to find himself safely outside of Shropshire church and fairly started on the road home.

“The moments throbbed on, and Mick’s anxiety

increased. He was wound up to a pitch of intense excitement. His forehead was damp with terror ; his hair bristled on his head. At last he could stand it no longer, and retreating to the furthest wall away from the chancel, he crouched behind the font, among the brooms, spades, and water-buckets that were kept in that quarter of the building. Nothing would do. He could neither arrest the ceaseless throb of time, nor still the beatings of his own heart. Relentlessly, as it seemed to him, the old clock thumped on ; every thump was like the stroke of an iron mallet on the nerve of Mick's ear. It brought round midnight, and would bring the ghost too.

“The first stroke of twelve ! The moment was come. O’Flaherty hardly dared, yet he felt irresistibly impelled, to look up from his concealment. All was even as the old woman had said. The chancel again shone with light ; the communion-table had disappeared, and in its place stood the altar, rich with the gorgeousness of three centuries ago. Crucifix, reliquaries, candlesticks, reflected the tapers’ blaze ; while the delicate crocketings of the tabernacle seemed to climb, like the aspiring tendrils of a beautiful plant, to the rafters overhead.

"Clang upon clang, the strokes of midnight resounded. The last still vibrated, when, behold ! from the vestry came forth the pale worn priest, clad as before, in his sable vestments. He ascended the steps, disposed his chalice and book, then stood with his face to the altar.

'*Is there no one,*' asked he in those wailing tones of entreaty that had struck Betty with terror, '*no one here who will serve my Mass ?*

"The bodily fear in which he stood, glued O'Flaherty's tongue to the roof his mouth. For the life of him he could not utter a sound.

"The silence continued some little time. Then came the second question, in yet more beseeching tones :

'*Is there no one here who will have the charity to serve my Mass ?*

"Mick stood spell-bound, unable to speak a syllable ; as one who is suffering under a nightmare, and would scream if he could.

"The third time came those accents of untold agony :

'*Is there indeed no one here who will have the charity to serve an unhappy sinner's Mass ?*

"'Troth, an' here's one, yir riv'rence, for want of a better,' cried Mick, making what seemed to

him a superhuman effort. He sprang forward : he reached the altar step, and knelt there as he had been used to do, times out of number, in the little parish chapel of Knocknafiernan.

“ The priest, or ghost, on his part manifested no surprise, and instantly began the Mass. O’Flaherty carefully avoided looking him in the face. At first he felt urged by a kind of desperate resolution to perform what he had undertaken ; then, as the holy action proceeded, a feeling of great charity and devotion stole over him, and gradually absorbed his mind. He thought what a high privilege it was to be allowed to do such an act of mercy for one who so greatly needed it ; what long and terrible sufferings the poor priest’s soul must have undergone in the penal fires for his past neglect ; what a cruelty also to numberless other poor souls had been committed in Shropton, and all over England, by taking away the daily Sacrifices offered for their benefit : what multitudes of them were even then suffering untold agonies, and had suffered them for three hundred years, who, but for that spoliation, might have been in the enjoyment of Heaven’s bliss. These and many such thoughts came rushing into his mind as he served the Mass ; and never, in the most devout

days of his boyhood, and in his native land, had he so deeply realised the blessing it was to assist at the Adorable Sacrifice.

“ I am telling my story, ladies and gentlemen,” continued the Student, “ in my own way, just as I heard it. I believe that, being thus more genuine, it may be more acceptable to you than if tampered with, or adapted. Yet,” pursued he, with some little hesitation, “ I am not sure that I am right in thinking so?”

“ By all means,” answered the Nabob, who had rather a faculty for answering on behalf of the rest; “ let us have the tale just as it was told. We are cosmopolites here”—with a puff of his hookah—“ and I, for one, have seen too much of your Church in India, and of the exemplary conduct of its priests, to laugh at any of its legends, so long as I am not called upon to believe them.”

“ We must always distinguish,” said the Student a little gravely, “ between what a Catholic is *called on* to believe, and mere floating stories like mine, which rest (so far as they rest on anything) only on the historical evidence, more or less, they come to us invested with. But, encouraged by your acquiescence, I proceed.

“ To travellers so well accustomed to the Conti-

nent I need not explain what are the chief features of Mass, nor give a general account of the mode of serving it. Schiller gives it you in his exquisite ballad of “Fridolin.” Though I cannot pretend that my hero, Mick O’Flaherty, did his part as gracefully as the youthful page there celebrated, yet he proved, on that strange night in Shropton, he had not forgotten the instructions of the pious Christian Brothers in Knocknafierman, who had ‘had the bringing of him up.’

“ Introit, Epistle, Gospel, Offertory, Sanctus, Consecration, were duly performed by the phantom priest at the phantom altar. Then, when the holy function had proceeded thus far, the server for the first time ventured to steal a glance up at the priest’s face. He dreaded to see the worn look of intense suffering, the pallid and drawn features described by old Betty, as having struck her with such terror. Instead, he met a countenance radiant with the light of sanctity and joy. It was a look such as the most gifted artists have tried in vain to render, when they would depict Saint Stephen in ecstasy gazing into the opened heavens, or Saint Francis in rapture listening to the chords that are touched by an angel. The priest’s countenance *appeared in a halo of light*; not reflected from the

blaze of tapers, but as an inborn radiance, emanating from an overflow of bliss within the soul. O'Flaherty had never imagined anything that could so meet the eye, and speak of heaven invisible : the tears gushed into his eyes, but he was too awe-struck to utter a sound.

"And so the Mass proceeded. Every motion, every minute observance laid down in rubric or rite of the Missal, swiftly and exactly were they accomplished. Yet the spirit-priest seemed all the while as one absorbed in the inward joy that possessed him, and his movements were like those of one who walks in some ecstatic dream. The last moment came. You must know that in a Mass for the Dead no blessing is given at the conclusion ; the intention of the holy function is concentrated on those who are not in bodily presence there. But now the priest turned towards his server ; he raised his hand—a hand through which the tapers shone—and made over him the sign of the cross. The Irishman felt irresistibly impelled at that moment to look up again into the priest's face. There are looks that contain a volume ; but this contained one such as O'Flaherty had never read in mortal countenance.

"It was not hope : it seemed already the fruition

of that heaven for which the poor soul had waited so long ; and towards O'Flaherty, the instrument of his deliverance, a look of thanks that went beyond every expression of mere human gratitude or good will. The poor fellow was subdued under the light of that countenance during the moment in which it was turned upon him. He bowed his head low to receive the blessing ; and his hot tears again fell on the altar pavement.

“ He raised his head the moment after. The priest was gone. He looked above, around,—not a trace of anything belonging to the mysterious transaction he had been engaged in. All had reverted to the normal state of Shropton chancel. There was the table with its velvet cushions, the book for the rector, the lion and unicorn over the chancel arch, and the mere white-washed walls. An owl hooted at him through the window ; the old clock went on, thumping out the seconds with its rusty monotone.

“ Had he, then, been dreaming all the while ? The *junta* who sat on old Betty's case, and resolved it into a dream, would have decided this in like manner. Mick, however, was firmly convinced of the contrary. What is more, it produced in him a definite and abiding change. When harvest-

ing was over, and he left Shropton, his first act was to find the priest in the nearest town that lay on his way back to Ireland; and make a confession, which I fear was a reparation for many previous opportunities neglected. On his return to Knocknafiernan, he became the edification and the model of the place; the right-hand man of Father Larry in all that concerned the good of the parish, specially in every devotion for relief of the suffering souls in purgatory.

“Mick was always persuaded, too, that by the intercession of the priest, whom he had thus been the means of sending to glory, he received from time to time many signal favours. What these were, he never precisely explained to his friends; and if Father Larry knew them, it was in some way that sealed his lips; but from hints which O’Flaherty dropped now and then, *one* was supposed to be, a warning that his death would occur within a definite period. Certain it is, that few men in that part of the country lived in such constant preparation for the solemn hour; “an’ ‘twas a dale betther,” said he, “than bein’ one o’ ta gentry, an’ havin’ a family banshee, which the likes of him couldn’t pretend to anyhow.”

“But what became iv all th’ other poor sowl

o' priests," asked Mick's mother, when he told her his English adventure one winter's night, sitting over a bog fire in their little cabin, "as wanted to say Masses they'd forgot, an' had no O'Flaherty, nor anyone else, to serve them, astore?"

"Musha, 'tis myself doesn't know," returned Mick. "Maybe, when th' whole country turned Prodestan, let alone a few, the few itself turned half round—leastways caught somethin' iv it, like a touch o' the fayver—and disremembered ta poor sowls, thof not intirely. Sure, mither, thim Sassenachs never think o' sayin' the *De profundis* afther Mass for such as has none to help 'em!"

When the Student had thus concluded his legend, there was silence among the party for a little while. They were not, of course, prepared to admit some of the first principles on which it was founded; but it seemed, notwithstanding, to suggest grave thoughts, on which they were not indisposed to dwell.

They were soon roused, however, by the lively tones and quick rattling manner of the Irishman, *who announced his narrative as*

The Irishman's Tale.

A TRUE SEA-STORY.

"SOME thirty years since, I crossed from London to Hamburg in the steam-packet plying between those ports. I forget her name, though I remember too well her power of giving very ugly lurches. Probably she has long since been broken up, or gone to the bottom. She was a vile old thing, too small by one-third for that passage. For 'there-away,' as a sailor would express it, the whole force of the Northern Sea sweeps down sometimes so as to make you think rude Boreas is coming in person to exact his dues. The—whatever her name was—the Stormy Petrel, if you like to malign that stout little sailor-bird—behaved all the worse for the 'dirty weather' which overtook us. She creaked and groaned, laboured, lifted, and shivered (half-a-dozen more verbs would not describe it), till we were all in a state of mental suffering enough to satisfy *the most implacable* of our foes. I do be-

lieve a family *vendetta* in Sicily, or any other country held to be vindictive, would have been appeased, and shed iron tears, at the amount of misery we endured on that passage.

“ Mental suffering, I say advisedly; for the pains of sea-sickness are not to be gauged by the mere physical qualms of the present moment. It is not the agony of that despairing cry, ‘Steward !

“ the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony,”

nor all the attendant horrors, at any given moment, of a rough passage, that constitute the essence of your grief; it is the intellectual pain of anticipation. You know you are *in for it*; and are able—only too well able—amid the sights and sounds going on around you, to calculate the number of hours to be consumed in the passage.

“ All this was bad enough to a passenger in fair average health ; I mean, health before coming on board. Anyone, however, who had free use of his limbs could at least try to keep his ‘sea-legs’ on deck, despite the rolling and pitching ; or, failing that, could progress, by parabolic curves, to the vessel’s side, and hold on by the taffrail. He had this grim resource, whatever degree he might have reached in the graduated scale of misery, which

begins with the steamer's first real plunge into the trough of the sea, and ends only when she rounds the pier and hisses through smooth water.

“But on the particular passage I am to chronicle there was a poor old gentleman, crippled with rheumatic gout, whose hands and feet were about as available as the fins of a turtle sprawling on the deck of a West-Indiaman. I never knew who he was by name, calling, or antecedents ; nor why he was going to Hamburg ; nor why (except by an inadvertence astonishing as my own) he had determined to go in so bad a boat as the *Stormy Petrel*. All I remember is, that he lay groaning in his berth ; and the more at every heave, as was not unnatural, as indeed it would have been preternatural not to do. Poor Podagrius !—for I will not leave him nameless ; and the name shall be classical as well as appropriate ;—think of him for a moment ; what a combination of woes—gout, and a gale to boot ! Oh, the lurches ! Oh, the twinges ! and both of these intensified by—Oh, the qualms !

“The losses, all the crosses
That active life engage ;
The tears, all the fears
Of dim declining age !”

“*The dramatis personæ* of my small tragedy are

few ; fewer even than Horace would tolerate when he tells you that no fourth person should thrust in a word. I myself am only Chorus ; Podagrius is not diffusely eloquent, save by his grief, like Niobe ; so the drama is rather wanting in action. Let me hope it makes up in pathos. But now enters he who completes the number, and brings on the catastrophe.

“There was on board a rough, grizzled, Scottish sea-captain ; a kindly soul, who seemed a sort of half-brother, or cousin once removed, to the nor'-nor'-wester, and on the best of terms with all the elements. It would take a more scientific observer of human nature than I claim to be, to determine whether the old captain’s perfect immunity from sea-sickness may have derived a further touch of the enjoyable from the misery around him. La Rochefoucauld avers that there is something in the misfortunes of our best friends that does not wholly displease us. And Lucretius sings, in versification worthy of a better cause, that it is delightful to stand on a rock and see one’s fellow-mortal labouring amid the stormy billows ; ‘not’ (for he *does* add some gloss to this truculent statement)—‘not that there is joyous pleasure in the fact that anyone is tormented ; but because it is sweet to behold

evils from which oneself is free.' These, however, are the dicta of a cynic and a heathen respectively; nor will I impute any such feeling to my Scotch captain. I am only to record his words.

"They were meant to be words of sympathy and consolation; and really seemed, from the half-articulate murmurs of the helpless sufferer, to have something of that effect. Says the old sea-dog to the old land-turtle—

"And here let me remark, he did not say it once or in a passing way. He came down from deck to say it; he said it, as a little almsgiving or act of charity, before and after meals—perhaps as a reparation for enjoying his meals regularly in the very presence of us, who were suffering in the berths round him. But the words were ever the same, spoken in the braiest of Scottish accents, harsh as a nutmeg-grater, with a manner rough but genial, and a loud tone, as though nausea did not also make one's ears as sensitive to sound as the *mimosa* to the touch.

"'What words, then?' I see your looks ask me.

"Well, it was only just a question he repeated each time; and it ran thus:

"*Aweel, ma freend, and hoo's the warld treaten'*
ye noo?"

"How was the world treating him? Why, the world was doing for him what it always does for those who are not of *its* set; what Schedule A does for Schedule B: it was simply ignoring him, neglecting him. The world was unconscious of the old man's existence, did not wish to be informed, and would have been much bored to be told the story. (I fear my hearers may, in that particular, somewhat resemble the world at large.) The world, indeed! Why, what had either the great world of London, or the greater world in general, to say or do with any treatment a gouty old gentleman might receive on his passage to Hamburg?

"Since then, I have sometimes thought we are under a like delusion when we suppose the world so mightily employed with ourselves, our doings, and our haps. 'What will the world say?' is a doubt that has nipped many a noble and many a useful project in the bud. The fact being, that the world is so little interested whether we do this or that, that if it knew all about it, believe me, it would hardly take its cigar out of its mouth, to give us one puff, or one stare. We may suffer, or we may prosper, without the world caring, or caring even to know. That is my moral from the passage to Hamburg.

"And is this all? Yes, gentle, as far as I am aware. I only promised you a true story, which I hereby vouch for its being. And you cannot doubt its being a sea-story also?"

The Irishman's incident was received with much good-humour, and the college Fellow complimented him on the moral he had contrived to draw from his voyage. Amy wondered how he *could* have remembered what had happened so long ago, and looked at him with much respect, as a prodigy of memory. The man of fifty told her that as people advance in life they often remember best what happened to them when they were quite young. Once, he said, there was a very famous man, who had seen so much of life, of its sorrows and disappointments, that when someone came to him who had invented an art of remembering things, and hoped he would give him a reward for it, the famous man (who had a long name, too long for Amy to spell) told him he had rather reward anyone who would teach him how to forget. Amy thought she would not much mind forgetting geography and the multiplication-table, only then she

would have to learn them all over again. Captain Harris said, it *was* rather a long while to keep the remembrance of a fit of sea-sickness ; but the Irishman defended himself by remarking what vitality there was in every impression of real pain or suffering.

All this while the college Fellow had been arranging a manuscript, which he had rummaged out from his trunk, as his contribution to the general amusement ; and, silence being restored, he at once began

The College Fellow's Ms.

LEGEND OF THE WILLOW PATTERN.

“Two swallows met in the air, above the palace of the Mandarin Teo-Tsing. Circling in rapid flight, they rejoiced in the warmer climate to which they had migrated from the north. And thus they twittered, *hirundinæ*, in swallow’s-tongue ; which, the learned say, bears a strong resemblance to the English. They might be denoted by the quarters of the heavens from which they have respectively flown.

“*North-east Swallow.* Ah, Sir Blackcap ! well met again. We have not twittered to each other for several autumns. How chances that ?

“*North-west Swallow.* Mere capriciousness, friend Fleetwing. I dislike making the same migrations yearly. Why should a swallow of spirit be less adventurous than those human crawlers, who toil at their tortoise pace, now to Rome, now to Malaga, now to Phyle, and qualify themselves

for their Travellers' Club by an exertion which would cost you and me a dozen sweeps of the wing?

"*Fleetwing.* Ay; so you have been seeing the world? Whence do you hail now?

"*Blackcap.* My point of starting and of return is pretty constant. Any card left for my address would find me under the eaves of a snug sou'-west angle of a broken, ivy-grown tower in Calder Abbey, Cumberland. I love the spot, partly from early association, for I was hatched there; partly for its cosmopolite position, within an easy half-hour of Holyhead and all the Irish Channel, the Isle of Man, or Scotland. A few flits further, and I am in Belfast, with the latest Irish news; I overhear the gossip that is to cross to Greenock and Liverpool; all that has come under the Atlantic to Valentia. I can perch under the eaves of the telegraph-office; or, by a slight exertion, get the last advices at head-quarters in Dublin. I know every strike among the Lancashire workmen before their masters do. In short, the three kingdoms lie before me on that spot, not to mention (as proclamations say) the town of Berwick-on-Tweed.

"*Fleetwing.* One would think you were a superannuated, stiff-winged swallow, fond of keeping to a narrow range.

“*Blackcap*. My flights would contradict that. Here we are in China, a far cry from Calder Abbey; and I mean, before the spring, to take a sweep round by Aleppo or Calcutta (haven’t made up my mind which), and so find myself in Calder again. Meanwhile, Fleetwing, where have *you* been?

“*Fleetwing*. Oh, I come direct from Siberia, making an angle that way, after a summer among the Dog-ribbed Indians. Different forms of barbarism, *Blackcap*. If a swallow had a heart in place of a gizzard, it would bleed to see those Poles, and other victims of an unfeeling tyranny, condemned to the mines for the crime of loving their country. If the kingdom of the air were intrusted to the vulture, with hawks for pursuivants, we could not be worse off than they are now.

“*Blackcap*. The Emperor of all the Russias would not be flattered. He is at least the eagle; though he can strike down very small prey by times. Apropos of emperors, what think you of the Celestial potentate here, first cousin to the Sun and Moon, and lord of the Vermilion Pencil?

“*Fleetwing*. To say truth, *Blackcap*, on the word of a swallow, I have seen so much for and against most of the species *man*, crowned and uncrowned,

as leads me to conclude a mere toss-up between one and another.

“*Blackcap.* ‘*Exceptis excipiendis,*’ as I heard a professor chirp out, as I was resting under the eave of the philosophy school at Louvain.

“*Fleetwing.* Certainly; for ‘*Exceptio probat regulam,*’ if I rightly caught the twitter of a proposition, as I fluttered at the window of the gymnasium at Moscow. There are some of those crawlers on the earth so honest and true, they put to shame the comments of us cynical birds.

“*Blackcap.* Nevertheless, and we Swallows know it, the race is largely infested with selfishness, as we are with fleas.

“*Fleetwing.* What makes me scream with laughter is this: When these conceited creatures design their works of art, they cannot do so without putting *us* in as the chief ornament, prominent above their boasted selves, with all their blue palaces, trees, bridges, and what not.

“*Blackcap.* I declare, that never struck me.

“*Fleetwing.* No? Why, I often take a flight, for mere amusement, to the old porcelain manufactory of Kieng-te-Tching. There you see these slow bipeds, toiling and daubing all day long, just as they daubed (my ancestors have reported) fourteen hun-

dred winters ago—and summers too, for aught I know. At what? Why, painting swallows! They grind their blue, knead their clay, heat their furnaces, put themselves to a world of pains, to paint us, my friend, us! Man, with all his pretension, is but the self-appointed hereditary portrait-painter of the swallow tribe.

“*Blackcap*. Ah, what would you say if you took a flight with me to the north-west? There you would find countless tribes of men who ‘plume themselves’ (so they express it) on their civilisation, and look on the rest of the species as mere owls. Yet they imitate us swallows in the most servile way.

“*Fleetwing*. How imitate us?

“*Blackcap*. By actually wearing swallow-tails! Yes, I assure you; their vestments of ceremony are cut as if a swallow had sat on a rail for a pattern. When they meet in the evening for dancing and other ridiculous observances, they put on a black coat with swallow-tails, to make themselves look as like us as possible. To carry the deception further, Lords and Commons then array their throats and chests in a bad imitation of our white down. Their dances, too, are a mere lumbering, ungraceful mimicry of our circling flight; so that these self-

sufficient and slow bipeds might be taken for so many exaggerated caricatures of us Swallows, and our cousins the Swifts and Martens. But I interrupt what you were saying of the porcelain paintings.

“*Fleetwing*. No, my story will keep. Tell me something more of this Swallow-mania of the tribes you visit.

“*Blackcap*. They have among them the writings of one of their species called Shakspeare, of whom they are very proud; though, inconsistently enough, they call him not a Swallow but a Swan. One of his most admired descriptions is about ourselves, our habits, and our dwellings.

“*Fleetwing*. Pray let me hear it.

“*Blackcap*. Well, I must translate it as well as I can out of the rude twittering language in which lie wrote and his countrymen chirp it.

“This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his lov'd masonry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty frieze,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendant bed and fruitful cradle;
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
The air is delicate.”

What think you of the lines? I twitter them sometimes in my nest in Calder.

"*Fleetwing*. Not so bad, considering they were written on earth. What if the poet had been up in a balloon, and caught some little inspiration from the upper air?

"*Blackcap*. Oh, but that's nothing to an old Greek poet, whom I heard translated in the schools at Oxford (a quiet nook, on whose gray window-sills I often plume a wing). He wrote a drama expressly about our feathered tribes, and called it the *Birds*: in which are some good things, though he had the impudence (conceive it!) to liken our free life to the petty plottings of his species. In short, I should never have done if I told you how many fine things they try to say of us. Another of their twitterers, named Coleridge, when he is chirping about the wild music that rises and falls on the strings of a harp in a window, finds nothing to compare it to but a flight like ours. He says, the cadences

"Footless and wild, like birds of paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untam'd wing."

"*Fleetwing*. The creature deserves to be the laureate of Swallows. I could cap your quotations, however, with several wild chants among the Dog-ribbs in our praise. They even name their children by *epithets of swiftness* derived from our flight.

"Blackcap. Oh, as to names, the English are insatiable in their choice of bird-names. Swift is one of their most classical writers, and there are Martins innumerable. A Martin painted wonderful pictures for them ; his brother set fire to their noblest cathedral. Then, for the slower tribes, they have robbed all the regions of the air to feather their family nests : a Wren built their great church in London ; Finch is the name of a noble race ; a Hawke was one of their admirals ; a Sparrow headed lists of charitable subscriptions ; a Swan is among their millionaire tradesmen, and furnishes eider-down tippets and plumes for their highest dames ; Gosling cashes cheques in the City to any amount—for the husbands have to pay for Swan's tippets, I can assure you. Poor things, as they cannot fly, they may call themselves after us as much as they will. But I do not let you off your story.

"Fleetwing. A moment. Anything more about this human respect for us ? for self-love, I suppose, has infected us from them, and I want to know.

"Blackcap. Yes, I had almost forgotten the Martlets.

"Fleetwing. Who are they ? though I remember the name in the crawler you quoted—what's his name ?—Shakspeare.

“*Blackcap*. The Martlets are ancestors of ours, so mention them with respect. They are mythical and heraldic Swallows, which the English paint on their shields, as the Chinese paint Swallows on their dishes. Alfred the Great, one of their greatest, bore five Martlets on his arms ; they remain on his escutcheon in the college he founded,* and in the Queen’s palace and parliament, in Westminster Hall, and in their fantastic books and blazonings. Martlets take rank with their lions, harps, leopards, portcullises, Tudor roses, and the other stone devices, whose crannies afford lodgment for our nests.

“*Fleetwing*. Aha ! A living Swallow in the nineteenth century, building cheek by jowl with the stone Martlets of a bygone age, is a proud thought indeed.

“*Blackcap*. It is like Arundel (which is only *Hirondelle* mispronounced) inhabited by the descendants of those who first piled the old stones of the castle together.”—

At this stage of the reading, the college Fellow’s monotone was arrested by a long-drawn, melancholy yawn from little Amy. She, at least, had had enough of it. Though the interjection was

* University College, Oxford.

met by a reproving frown from Lady Enshawe, while the audience in general politely assured the college Fellow that they wished for the remainder, he proceeded with a rather 'bated air, as one who feels doubtful of having hit on a topic interesting to his hearers.

“*Blackcap.* Come, your story, without preface or delay.

“*Fleetwing.* Once upon a time, then, more than fourteen hundred winters ago—

“*Blackcap.* Where does it come from?

“*Fleetwing.* Out of a strange manuscript which an old mandarin was reading last year in his summer-house to his little grandson. I had clung under the eaves, tired with my flight across the North Pacific from Vancouver’s Island; and was arrested by the word ‘SWALLOW,’ though the old man mis-pronounced it vilely.

“*Blackcap.* Well?

“*Fleetwing.* Fourteen hundred years ago, and more, a new religion appeared in China. Its teachers came from the setting-sun, far beyond the mountains of Hoang-Ho. They were holy men, of strict observance, but could not agree with the teachers of Fo, nor the teachers of Fo with them. This was more extraordinary, because

both religions, at first sight, seemed in some points to resemble each other. When the new teachers (Christians, as they called themselves) were questioned on this point, they made answer that the religion of Fo was a mere counterfeit of the truth, sufficiently like it, in some things, to deceive those who embraced it; but they themselves were the true disciples of an undoubted truth; and they did many wonderful things to prove it. They made blind men see, and deaf men hear; they delivered others from bad spirits who tormented them, and brought back to life some who had died.

“Among those who were healed of diseases was the Princess Yang-ching-tsing, youngest daughter of the Emperor Ching-Tam. Her recovery from a long and wasting sickness was effected in a moment, by some words from one of the missionaries of the new teaching, who sprinkled blest water over her, with a sign which he made with his hand, while she declared with a loud voice that she believed in that religion. Her example was followed by five or six of her ladies, and a number of the officers of the imperial household.

“All these events filled the Emperor Ching-Tam with fury. He issued an edict, declaring, by the finger-nails of his forefathers—

“*Blackcap*. Finger-nails? A most swallow-like affirmation!

“*Fleetwing*. Yes: the Chinese princes and nobles pride themselves on the length of their nails, as an indication of nobility and exemption from manual labour. Hence, the Lord High Treasurer of two reigns ago, being unable to make his financial calculations without biting his nails, was degraded from his office and banished to Canton, where he now plies with a vegetable-boat to the English and other vessels in the port.

“*Blackcap*. Curious. But I beg your pardon: pray go on.

“*Fleetwing*. Declared by his ancestors’ finger-nails that any of his subjects who became a disciple of the new learning should be thrust into the state prison, and wear the *cangue*—a heavy wooden frame fitted round his neck like a pillory—till he recanted. This prison was a building on a small island close to the palace gardens, joined to it by a bridge over that branch of the Pei-ho River on which Pekin is built. Do you know the place?

“*Blackcap*. Perfectly, by report. A cousin of mine wintered there four years ago.

“*Fleetwing*. It has no doubt become changed since the date of the story. At that time—for so

the old mandarin's Ms. described it, and all the porcelain artists of Kieng-te-tching have depicted it—the Emperor's summer palace was a choice building, supported on marble columns, and overshadowed by a gigantic orange-tree, with ripe fruit of a portentous size. Other ornamental trees were planted all about, on artificial rockwork, the most remarkable being an ancient willow, whose roots drew moisture from the river's brink, its branches drooping over that 'bridge of sighs,' which, as another human chirper called Byron says, had

"A palace and a prison on each hand."

Farther off, that is, towards the mouth of the Pei-ho, with no land between it and the open sea, was another small island, esteemed sacred by the Chinese, because a pagoda had been recently built there to a worship which was itself recent—the worship of Fo. This was also planted with palms, willows, and orange-trees. But to understand my description, you should take a flight to the potteries of Kieng-te-tching, and see one of the dishes they are painting there at this very moment.

"*Blackcap.* I'll tell you what will do as well. Let us flit down to the sill of Teo-Tsing's dining-room here, and look in at the plates laid out for dinner.-

“*Fleetwing*. Agreed: here we are. Look at that vegetable-dish; don’t you see the whole scene?

“*Blackcap*. Yes, and a good deal more. Here is a butter-boat quite near us. Who are those three figures going over the bridge? They seem to be carrying instruments of torture. There is the *cangue* you mentioned just now, in the hands of the middle one. What has the first got?

“*Fleetwing*. A cruel iron hook, with which they used to tear people’s sides, especially rebels against the Emperor’s edicts. It got the name of the ‘dragon’s claw,’ because the dragon was the Emperor’s *coat of arms*, as your friends would say in the West.

“*Blackcap*. Only that in the West, as I have told you, they prefer the Swallow. They used, though, in England to put the lion and unicorn in motion against any religion which a certain Henry VIII. and his successors happened to dislike. But what is the third man carrying over that bridge?

“*Fleetwing*. A scourge with a long handle, and a ball of lead hanging from the chain of it. But to explain all this, I must come back to my story.

“No sooner had the recovery of the Princess Yang-ching-tsing been bruited abroad in China and the neighbouring countries, than her hand was

sought by various noble princes and mighty chieftains. The author of the Ms. I am quoting seemed to consider it a duty of loyalty to chronicle them all in order ; and thus he goes through the catalogue :

“ Ruschuk, prince of Ispahan, with forty chariots in a row,
 Twang, the Tartar chief, who bends in full career the stub-
 born bow ;
 Selim, calif of Bassora, with his crooked falchion dyed
 In the blood of Delhi’s bravest ; and the Cham in all his
 pride ;
 Toiling o’er the dim Uralians, Nicolsoff, surnamed the
 Roarer,
 Who decapitates his serfs beyond the fountains of Petchora ;
 From the stormy Caspian sea-board Dimitrofsy, no mean man,
 Where blue Volga rolls its waters through the steppes of
 Astrachan ;
 Down beyond the farther West, a pale barbarian Cæsar, come
 To Byzantium’s Golden Horn from out the ruins of old Rome ;
 E’en from Guzerat, from Korasan, they come—from far Loo-
 Choo,
 Indus, Oxus, Gunga, Sagh’lien Oula, Tarcucyomdsou ;
 Other chieftains, three half dozen, each with spearmen grim
 and tall,
 From the sunset thirteen, five to north of our Celestial Wall.”

“ *Blackcap*. Tell me, Fleetwing—was all the manuscript in such a strange jingling twitter as that ?

“ *Fleetwing*. You know, these human creatures have one way of expressing themselves when they twitter about the common things of their slow

lives ; another, when they record ancient events, or attempt to describe things above them, as the moon and stars, or ourselves. The first they call prose, the second poetry. Your quotations show the same thing.

“*Blackcap*. But this last did not strike me as at all like the twitter of the crawler I quoted, Shakspeare, or the other.

“*Fleetwing*. Oh, there are twitterers and twitterers, of course. But let me finish.

“ Notwithstanding all I have said, the Princess Yang-ching-tsing determined not to marry anyone who would not agree with the new teaching; or rather, not to marry at all.

“ The Emperor Ching-Tam, in the height of fury, accused those who had brought these doctrines to China of having thus persuaded his daughter. It seems, that was rather their custom, when they thought people had sufficiently imbibed their principles to render them capable of such a resolution. Anyhow, neither the princess nor her teachers made any attempt to disprove the accusation. On the contrary, they professed themselves ready to submit to anything the Emperor might decree against them in consequence of their religion and its observances.

"It is unpardonable of me not to have mentioned that the princess, being of a gentle disposition, cultivated great friendship with all the feathered tribe, especially with us Swallows. She fed our ancestors daily from her open window ; and had open gilt cages suspended in her apartment, out of reach of the Chinese cats, where swallows might rest and roost, or even build. Some of the more ancient dishes, I am told, represented these cages in the imperial palace ; but the modern barbarians, as you may see from Teo-Tsing's dinner-service, have omitted them. This engaging attribute of the princess is mentioned early in the manuscript I quote ; hence it was that I caught the word 'swallow,' and stayed to listen to the rest.

"At last, Yang-ching-tsing became so accustomed to hear us twitter at her window, that she began to learn a little of our language. And when the Emperor her father sent her to the prison across the bridge, which happened very soon after her refusal of all the offers made to her, she found more leisure to improve in the study.

"*Blackcap.* Is it not singular, Fleetwing, that the human creatures never think of cultivating our speech ? In the parts I frequent they spend a

vast deal of trouble in teaching our absurd cousins the parrots *their own* foolish chirpings; and the parrots are ridiculous enough to submit. As I rested under the eaves of the parrot-room in the Zoological Gardens in London, I almost felt ashamed of wearing feathers as I listened to that humiliating exhibition. To be sure, the parrots are starved into it, and learn their lesson on bread and water. Now this toil and vexation would be spared, and great advantages to the human race secured, by their learning the bird-language instead.

“*Fleetwing*. Especially the swallow dialect. It never seems to strike them, though.

“*Blackcap*. The same with music. They make bullfinches and starlings pipe some of their brainless airs, and villainously out of tune too. How could a bird of any self-respect condescend to do that well which it is an indignity to do at all? Why do they not try to adopt the unconstrained chirpings, and (as far as their earthly nature allows) the glorious carols of us, inhabitants of the air? But to your story.

“*Fleetwing*. I must wind up, and rejoin my companions. The princess, by assiduous practice, not only made out what the swallows in her window were saying, but succeeded in twittering

to them a little herself, like a half-fledged swallow. Thus she learnt that Twang, the Tartar chief already mentioned, was disposed to become a disciple of the new religion. The princess was overjoyed at this news, because it opened a prospect of release not only for herself, but for the teachers of her religion, who were imprisoned in the same island by the Emperor's orders, and suffering great cruelty from their gaolers. They had been all made to wear the cangue, their sides had been raked with the hook, and they were beaten daily with the loaded scourge, till they were half-dead. Yang-ching-tsing now determined to effect her own escape, and to carry them off with her. So she wrote a letter to Prince Twang, and tied it with a silken ribbon round the neck of my great-great-grandfather of two hundred and seventy generations back, who promised to deliver it safe at Twang's palace in Tartary.

"The Ms. gives the letter at full length, and a most pathetic one it is. She implored the prince, by whatever part of the new religion he had adopted, and by his honour as a king's son, to come and rescue herself and her companions in captivity. Though she gave him no hopes of her hand, she assured him of her undying gratitude

and constant prayers, if he would undertake this perilous enterprise.

“ Prince Twang was greatly surprised when, sitting in the summer-house of his palace after dinner, smoking a long bamboo pipe, he saw my ancestor fly through the air, dart into the summer-house, and alight on the bowl of his pipe, with the Princess Yang-ching-tsing’s letter round his neck.

“ Having untied and read the letter, he immediately resolved to undertake the adventure proposed to him at all hazards, and to rescue the princess and her priests. Accordingly, he wrote an answer in high and courtly phrase, and in verses which at least were not worse than those I quoted. He announced to her that he would land under her prison-windows in disguise, and would find some means to rescue her and the teachers of that religion in which he already half believed. Much more was added to the same purpose; then he tied the letter round my ancestor’s neck, who flew off with it straight to the island-prison. Meanwhile Twang collected a band of trusty followers, picked men among the bravest of his captains; he concealed them in a large covered junk, such as those which trade on the Pei-ho with vegetables. He himself put on the shabby garments of a veget-

able-dealer, which made him look like a kind of princely greengrocer ; and he concealed his scimitar within the folds. All his faithful followers were armed with heavy swords, bows, and arrows. And so they set out upon their voyage.

“ *Blackcap*. I begin to see, Fleetwing ; I see it all. This is the scene which appears, not only on Teo-Tsing’s dinner-service here, but in all parts of the world to which I fly. Your manufactory of—what’s its name?—Kieng-te-tching has set the fashion to the most conceited of the human race. The last time I flew by the Tuileries, there was the Emperor at luncheon, eating his parmesan off a little cheese-plate of the very pattern. High and low, these crawlers have constantly before their eyes that blue palace, blue trees, blue executioners, going over the blue bridge ; above all, prominent and gigantic, as the foreground of all, interpreting all, blue swallows.

“ *Fleetwing*. I delight to hear you talk in this way ; but I must really make an end.

“ *Blackcap*. Wait one moment. Do you know that in proud, unpoetic England, not only swallows in general, but this especial pattern, where swallows take such precedence, has been even celebrated by a poet ?

“*Fleetwing*. No ; do let me hear. I *must* wait for that.

“*Blackcap*. It is a popular writer named Hood, who writes in the character of a poetical footman. Among other subjects that come under his ken, he moralises on a broken dish of his master’s. After observing that ‘life’s as frail as dishes,’ he contemplates the fragments of what those Western barbarians call the ‘willow pattern,’ and thus winds up his reflections :

‘Walking about their groves of trees,
Blue bridges and blue rivers,
How little thought them two Chinese
They’d both be smash’d to shivers !’

“*Fleetwing*. Two Chinese, and no mention of swallows at all !

“*Blackcap*. They are barbarians, as I have said. It is a greater tribute to us, that they paint us : it is a silent, half-unconscious homage. Now, the end of your story.

“*Fleetwing*. While Prince Twang was speeding down the river Pei-ho, and had approached the city of Pekin, the Emperor had determined to use more stringent measures with the princess, and to threaten her with the instruments of torture, or even to use them. So he called for his three chief executioners, and bade them take the cangue, the ‘dragon’s claw,’ and the loaded scourge, and pro-

ceed straightway to the prison on the island. Now at the very moment when they were crossing the bridge to execute the Emperor's cruel order, Prince Twang hove in sight, steering the vegetable junk that concealed his trusty followers. Two of our ancestors, who had accompanied his voyage, flew on before him, and, overcome with joy, mounted high in the air over the prison roof, screaming out their congratulations to the princess that her rescue was come, just when it was most needed.

"The poor princess Yang-ching-tsing, seated disconsolate at her prison-window—(it was a great omission of the porcelain-painters at Kieng-te-tching not to have put her into the plates)—

"*Blackcap.* Why, there she is, in the butter-boat !

"*Fleetwing.* Ay ; and Prince Twang in the vegetable-boat. Seated at her window, she had seen the executioners arrive at the bridge : she saw the cruel instruments of torture in their hands. She turned pale, and would have fainted ; but at that moment she heard the screams of our ancestors in the air, announcing that rescue was at hand. At that moment, too, she heard the ripple of the water under the keel of Prince Twang's armed boat, that was rapidly nearing the island—"

" And at that moment also," continued the college

Fellow, "Hi-Yi, the youngest child of the Mandarin Teo-Tsing, a regular pickle of a young Chinaman, who had been watching the evolutions of Blackcap and Fleetwing, till they came within range of a hollow bamboo-cane, from which he could propel arrows with no small skill, launched a light shaft so accurately that it hit a feather from Blackcap's wing, and passed within an ace of Fleetwing's open beak. Upon which the two swallows, leaving their narrative unfinished, wheeled up to a higher and safer range, and the sequel of the Princess Yang-ching-tsing's history was lost to the world."

It was now Captain Harris's turn. If our reader has accompanied the story-tellers thus far, and will have patience also to hear the Captain out, he will discover why it was that, on commencing his narrative, Harris appeared notably graver than was common with him. He twirled his moustache industriously, as though trying to remember something more congenial to the moment and the company; then seemed to give it up in despair, and resolutely began

The Captain's Tale.

A NIGHT IN A CATHEDRAL.

“SOME years ago, I was quartered with my regiment in Dublin ; and a pleasant time we had of it among that genial and hospitable people. Their frank disposition leads them to welcome every well-behaved stranger with open heart and hand ; while the decided military leaning of the national character secures favour for a red coat, if inhabited by a gentleman. Among the agreeable acquaintances I made, there was a medical man, in more than average practice—Dr. Macnally—in whose family circle I whiled away many a careless hour. He was one of those cheery men who seemed fitted to roll easily through life, and to make the most of it as they go. A vigorous frame, unbroken health, activity of intellect, all the readiness and keen perception of the gay and ludicrous side of things which has made Irish wit proverbial, not only enhanced to him the enjoyment of the passing hour,

but seemed to promise a long continuance of his cheerful life.

“ I should not do my poor friend justice if I failed to record, that foremost among Doctor Macnally’s qualities was an active benevolence. At the call of humanity and the cry of distress under every form, he was prompt and ready in his response. Not only was his purse at the service of the needy ;—though that was so true that it prevented his realising the fortune to which his skill would naturally have advanced him ;—he had, moreover, certain hours in the day in which the humbler classes came to consult him *gratis*. He rose early, as a habit, that he might be at leisure to attend them. And I have known him leave the mirthful company, of which he was the soul, easily and blithely, not as if performing any great act of self-denial, to attend some poor fellow in a wretched garret, whose murmured blessing was the Doctor’s only and most welcome fee.

“ Why do I linger over these genial traits, when I am to record the sudden blighting of that vigorous and useful life? A fever of the malignant kind which Ireland knows too well—offspring of want, hunger, and misery—broke out in Dublin, and raged with more than usual violence in the Coombe

and other of the poorer quarters of the city. I need hardly say, my friend was at his post. His post, indeed, seemed everywhere. Organising relief committees, arranging temporary hospitals, gathering alms from the mansions of the wealthy, distributing them in the shape of medicines, food, wine, and blankets among the damp cellars and chilly garrets of the poor—Macnally moved to and fro like a Christian Esculapius; and healing or mitigation of the pangs of death attended his footsteps. Not Condé nor Nelson amid the thunders of the fight were more completely in their element, more energetic, or more noble-hearted, than the Doctor in the pestilential atmosphere of the fever-stricken Coombe of Dublin.

“ At length the plague abated ; but not, alas ! before his own turn had come. One Tuesday evening I had dined in his company, when he was the very Yorick of the circle. Before that day week I received a note from the undertaker, summoning me to my place in one of the mourning-coaches for his funeral the following day.

“ We old campaigners are supposed to be so familiar with the idea of death, that we pass for having somewhat blunted feelings on such occasions. Yet there is a wide difference between seeing men

struck down on the battle-field all around you, where ‘every bullet has its billet,’ and while the next may be quartered in your own person, and, on the other hand, the death-bed of a peaceful man, employed not in slaughter, but in healing, and cut off by an irresistible stroke, not in the attitude of strife, but amid the gentle ministries of help and rescue to his fellows. Accordingly, I took my place in the mourning-coach with a sad heart. I thought of that cheery voice now silenced, that vigorous frame collapsed, that ample forehead, ‘the dome of thought, the palace of the soul.’ In a word, I am not ashamed to own, that at those remembrances, and the contrast of the present mournful occasion, a tear clouded my eye, that has much oftener been dimmed by the grime of gunpowder.

“Our progress from Merrion-square to Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, where the interment was to take place, was at length concluded. While the last arrangements were being made, I met at the cathedral door Major Thompson; so let me call him, for I would not reawaken sad remembrances more than my story demands. He was my senior officer, a portly man in person, and of a kindred *spirit* with the deceased doctor. Graver than was

his wont, he took my arm ; and we strolled together through the silent aisles, stopping here and there to examine the monuments. Little did I think at the time how important to us the structure of these same monuments would soon prove, or that the difficulty of climbing them would cost one of our two lives.

“ The funeral was soon over, and the body of our departed friend let down into his family vault, near an entrance-door, which was seldom opened except for such special occasions. The attendance of friends had been numerous, and the crowd included all classes ; for, as I said, poor Macnally had been popular in his own wide circle from his social qualities, and at least equally so among the poor from his active kindness. We were not missed among so large a throng, when we strolled back among the tombs to read again, by the fast-fading light, the inscription on that of Dean Swift. Even my undress uniform and clanking sword attracted no notice : though, being on half-duty in barracks that day, I had been obliged to do what we soldiers consider snobbish to a degree, when it can be avoided, and had come with these military insignia about me.

“ Unnoticed by the rest, we on our part did not

observe that the vault had been hastily closed, and that all but the indispensable arrangements had been put off till next day should give sufficient light for them. A chill fog had been drifting up from Dublin Bay, and now deepened the gloom of the November evening. Still we went poring over the records of the dead, and wandering further from the door by which the funeral procession had entered. At length, when it grew so dark that we could no longer decipher a single letter, and the sepulchral statues glowered at us dimly, like so many half-seen ghosts, I became aware that it was high time to go back. Calling upon Thompson to retrace his steps, we made for the door, and found we had half the cathedral to traverse before we could reach it. I had not made three strides over the pavement before the door was closed with a harsh clang, and we heard the ponderous key turned in the rusty lock from outside.

“To halloo to the retreating sexton, and rush forward to try and secure our liberation, was the work of a moment. But the work of the next was to bring me down on the pavement with a stunning blow on the head and shoulder. In my haste, added to the dark, I had not observed a projecting step, which caught my foot; and it was well for me

that no fracture or dislocation had cost me my life on that eventful night. You will shortly see what I mean by saying this.

"Thompson, hearing my fall, stopped short on his own more leisurely course towards the door, and for some little time was employed in bringing me to myself. He seated me on the choir-step which had tripped me; and gradually I recovered my senses, though it was some little time, owing to the extreme pain, before I was convinced that I had broken neither arm nor collar-bone. Having done all for me he could, his next care, while I was hardly able to think for myself, was to devise some escape from our sudden imprisonment. For this purpose he went round the whole building; he shouted; he tried door after door, he attempted to scale the windows. He might as well have attempted the ascent of Mont Blanc without rope or crampions. At length, exhausted with his efforts, he returned to me, and we began to consider what was to be done.

"Again and again he returned to the charge; and, finding that no other mode afforded a hope, shouted for assistance till he was hoarse. But, whether the noises in the street drowned his voice, or the few who might have caught it were deterred

by fear from entering among the tombs, and attributed the sounds to something supernatural, he shouted in vain.

"At length he gave up these unavailing efforts, and prepared, as many a soldier has done before him, to make the best of a comfortless bivouac. The best chance for both of us was to retreat into the choir, and ensconce ourselves among the well-stuffed cushions on which the dignitaries prayed, or reposed, when their turn of duty summoned them to attend the service. In consideration of the pain I was suffering, poor Thompson helped me into the dean's stall, and extemporised for me a couch, with some additional cushions from those of the prebendaries. He then installed himself in the post of honour assigned to the sub-dean, and soon after I heard him snoring soundly.

"How long I uneasily reclined there as an unwilling and undignified Dean of St. Patrick's, I cannot tell. In some dubious state between fainting and dozing, I think I must have lost consciousness several times. In a wakeful moment, however, I distinctly heard, on the marble pavement of the choir, a sort of *thud*, like the fall of a muffled foot-step. I listened with an ear grown painfully acute by suffering, and soon heard the sound repeated.

The step drew nearer and nearer, advancing up the choir ; but when it left the marble, and began to ascend the wood-work leading to the stalls, I knew it to be the cautious leap of a *rat*.

“ Now, a rat is a disagreeable fellow at all times, and savage enough when driven to bay. I thought little, however, of the intruder, except as depriving me of my last chance of any sleep so long as he chose to remain in the neighbourhood. But, just as he had come (so far as I judged) within two sword’s lengths of me, I heard, as plainly as before, a *second* rat advancing, by measured and cautious jumps, towards me up the choir.

“ This was rather more serious ; but when a *third* followed, it became instantly horrible. For a thought shot into my mind, that probably these nocturnal visitors had their access into the cathedral through the vaults and from the drains leading down to the river Liffey ; and that they might come upon us, not by twos and threes, but in overwhelming numbers.

“ I called aloud to Thompson, and had some difficulty in rousing him ; so fast asleep was he. When, in a few words, I told him my thoughts, he at once saw our critical situation, and the necessity for immediate action. My shoulder was so

stiffened with the sprain and the cold of the night ; that I was in a helpless condition. When Thompson had got me upright, I was obliged to lean on him ; and nearly swooned again as I staggered out through the choir door.

" But it was a moment to summon up all the energies a man possessed : for death, and that most fearful one, stared us in the face. The same thought at once occurred to us both.

" 'To the monuments !' cried Thompson ; ' that is the only safe place ! If we can climb up to some point beyond the reach of these demons, good ! They could get at us anywhere among the stalls.'

" To the monuments, therefore, we made the best of our way ; and high time it was. The patterning, or rather thumping, of our enemies' feet became plainer every moment. They were advancing upon us in several directions ; the pace quickened too, as, emboldened by their numbers they lost the caution of their first approach.

" Thompson, poor fellow ! was a strongly-built man, of great muscular power. He lifted me in his arms as if I had been a child, with a wrench to my shoulder which made me groan aloud ; and bore me to the nearest monument. His utmost exertion, however, did not suffice to lift me over the

iron railings that guarded it. Meanwhile, the rats were absolutely surrounding us ; we heard them squeaking on every side. The boldest of them already commenced their attack, and flew at Thompson's legs. Encumbered with my weight, and unable to defend himself, he howled with rage and pain. Horror mingled now with our feelings. It was increased when, staggering with me to the railings of a second monument, he again found himself unable to lift me over.

I begged him to set me down, and let me shift for myself. This the brave fellow absolutely refused ; and in a few hurried words between his set teeth declared he would die first. At that moment a large rat flew at his throat. I managed, with my unwounded arm, to seize and dash it to the ground. In the despair of the moment we united our voices in one wild yell,—a yell so fierce that for a short space of time it seemed to keep the enemy at bay. They rushed upon us again, however, just as Thompson, with a strength lent by despair, had managed to shove me up the marble entablature of a third monument, and with his arms now disengaged, fought like a fury against the numerous assailants that swarmed round him. As for me, having once established my footing among the

iron spikes of the railing that surrounded the marble figure against which I leaned (a weeping Genius with inverted torch), I managed with much difficulty to draw my sword, and handed it down to poor Thompson, directing him by my voice where to grasp it in the dark. He seized it ; then rushing away with it before the legion of rats (as they had now become), whom I could hear pattering after him at full speed, he commenced a desperate combat for life, which, under the disadvantages of darkness and the number of his assailants, could only have one result.

“I have always been thankful, on recalling the events of that night, that the tragedy which so soon followed was enacted at a distance from the spot where I was. The impression, Heaven knows, is vivid enough as it is : though all I caught was some confused sounds, the clashing of my sword against the pavement, where poor Thompson, in quite another part of the cathedral, fought desperately for life ; then his fall, as they pulled him down ; a scream—that rings through my ears at this moment—”

Lady Enshawe turned deadly pale, and closed her eyes. The niece was sitting speechless with horror. Sir Robert touched the Captain's elbow. He, absorbed in his story, had ceased to notice the effect of it on his hearers.

Recalled by the touch, he broke off at once. He rose, went to the fire, spoke loud and cheerfully, threw on some more logs, and called for a song.

This was sung by the Improvisatore, who seemed to hail the interruption, as affording him an opportunity to break the silence, as intolerable to a professed talker as a professed talker is to unprofessional conversers.

During the song, "the Squire," as Sir Robert Enshawe was generally called, turned to the Captain, and said in an undertone :

"You buried him in the cathedral?"

"His clothes, and the skeleton within them," hoarsely whispered the Captain in reply.

It was some time before the spirits of the party, and especially of Lady Enshawe, rallied from the shock given to them by the Captain's interrupted narrative, of which all supplied the conclusion only too easily and too truly in their imaginations. *As to the Captain, he was evidently vexed*

with himself for having thus over-weighted the light occupations of the passing hour by such a reality. Altogether, it was a relief to everybody to turn to the next name on the list, and calm themselves with the monotonous voice and commonplace matter that characterised

The Man of Fifty's Chronicle.

“It is needless to remind you, after the name you have given me, that I have lived in this world for half a century. Nothing remarkable in that; though mortuary tables would show that fifty is above the average of human life. But man is a creature of a day, and his antiquity becomes rapidly an accomplished fact. The current opinions and mode of living which mark society now will appear strange bygones less than fifty years hence. And so, on looking back to those which prevailed when I first began to think and observe, they seem to me as if recorded in some ancient chronicle. I feel to be reading a page or two from the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

“Walter Scott wrote, as a second title for his *Waverley*, ‘‘Tis Sixty Years since;’ and called up scenes which belonged quite to bygone history, as regarded his contemporaries. Charles Lamb has

recorded phases of London life which have gone completely into the ‘wastes of time.’

“Southey, in the fictitious *Espriella's Letters from England*, has marked in indelible printer's ink, and with his own graphic and nervous pen, the chronicles of an English epoch some ten years before mine begin. Who can be insensible to the value of such a sketch by such a writer? or who can fail to see that their value increases yearly as the world rolls on? The details themselves might not be of public interest, though many of those which Southey records in this amusing book are so. At all events, they are photographs of people and things that now are dust. Who would not value an undoubted portrait, a mere miserable daguerro-type, of Dionysius, Pansa, or any other householder in Pompeii, in his every-day costume, with the frescoed walls of his villa as a back-ground? Or of the sentinel whose skeleton was found in the sentry-box outside the gate of that devoted city? Yet Pansa may have been a very commonplace pater-familias; and the sentry one of the mere awkward squad, an uncouth raw recruit from Campania. No matter. We should hang them in our room, look at them, and show them with the liveliest interest, as genuine fragments of the past.

“Thus, to every generation, the records of the preceding have a fascination, a picturesqueness, all their own. We are removed from them, but only, as it were, to next door. The family voices speak to us from habits and dresses no longer worn ; they tell of bygone ideas and modes of life, but they are family voices still. It is almost as though a father’s portrait addressed us from its frame.

“Such thoughts, if others have them as vividly as myself, are my apology for throwing together the miscellaneous memories of a man of fifty.

“To begin : I have one memory, not very common, I believe. I can, though indistinctly, remember my great-grandmother. It is a faded hazy outline, among other remembrances of about the same period, which are better defined ; but there it is, and no one shall convince me of the contrary—an undoubted act of memory, though a weak one.

“More freshly imprinted on my mind’s eye is the image of Louis XVIII., as I saw him, towards the end of August 1822, some four years after the Bourbon’s Restoration, wheeled through the great gallery of the Tuileries. I see him to-day as freshly as I stared at him then, half-way between my fifth and sixth birthday. I have since corroborated some facts regarding this from one who then held

my childish hand; but I need no proof of the main fact, which is as living in me as anything which occurred yesterday. It was at a reception given only to ladies: some suspicion of a conspiracy among the suppressed Bonapartists having led to the rigid exclusion of all gentlemen. Probably I was almost the only representative there of the rougher side of humanity. The old King passed down the gallery in a wheel-chair, through the living avenue of those who attended the reception — an old ‘stout gentleman,’ dressed in a dark suit, with a star on his breast, which fixed itself in my imagination: unless I am possibly confusing this with Doctor Johnson’s childish memory of Queen Anne, as a stately lady in black, with diamonds. White hair, so my mind-picture is drawn, but it was powder, of course. He had a placid, benevolent, fat face, which, were I an artist, I could even now attempt with a pencil.

“Quite as vivid are other Parisian memories of the same date. Exhibitions of *marionnettes* in some public garden, probably the Tuileries, gave us the soldiers of Henri Quatre; wooden puppets, advancing by tuck of drum to the siege and capture of some puppet place or other. Up the pasteboard walls they scaled; into the pasteboard town they

rattled their wooden legs. It was the siege of Paris, I take it, where the good-hearted king caused bread to be thrown over the walls into the starved city, ‘preferring,’ as he said, ‘not to reign over corpses.’ Instructive representations, and germane to the political moment, as recalling to the populace the ancient glories (and goodness) of the French monarchy. Then followed a kind of *vaudeville*, or harlequinade. This was not the mere *tours de force* of agile dancing and buffoonery of the Christmas pantomime; but a harlequin speaking with a moral consciousness, and even a sense of the pathetic, who, being detected in some fault or escapade, ‘shed tears as big as pumpkins,’ as was graphically presented on the miniature stage, to the delight of the audience, grown and ungrown.

“Returning to England, one of my first impressions is being taken by a near relation to see Byron ‘lie in state,’ after death, in his house in Great George-street, Westminster. They had been school-fellows at Harrow. Byron’s body was sent home, as everyone knows, from Missolonghi, where he died; and here it rested for some short time, previous to the funeral procession which conveyed it to the vault in Hucknell Torkiard, near to that Newstead which is so inseparably linked with his

cheerless memory. This lying in state was a scene to impress a child : the room hung with black, and lit with wax sconces ; the coffin, with coronet and armorial bearings, of crimson velvet ; and a sepulchral urn of silver placed at the head, with an inscription—‘In this urn are deposited the heart and brains of the late Lord Byron.’ Poor Byron ! Looking back on him by the light of one’s present knowledge of his career, and his influence on the principles and literature of his day, thoughts many and strange arise on the mention of his ‘heart and brains.’

“Byron, the *Childe Harold*, brings me to Waterloo. A relative of mine was on that field very shortly after the great fight, and brought away the ponderous sword of a French cuirassier, with the brass eagle from a grenadier’s shako. It was before there was time to manufacture sham Waterloo relics at Birmingham. He used to describe the plough going over the fields in which the dead lay but half buried ; but on this I do not dwell. Let me go back from it to a period beyond my fifty years, to what a still older relation has told me of the scenes in the streets of London on the news arriving of the victory of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson. Men who had no acquaintance

with each other reported the chequered tidings as they met, and mingled their triumph and mourning in the same breath. Another (I am keeping always within the family circle) remembered to have seen, as a boy, Lord Lovat's head still fixed on Temple Bar.

"As to more general remembrances, I will detail them as they occur to me. I have very personal recollections of the old unreformed parliament,—the parliament of 'rotten boroughs'—where Gatton, Rye, Penrhyn were represented, and Manchester and Rochdale were not. I have asked for 'franks,' and had franks directed to me. In a few years, young people will hardly know that franks were letters (ten in number daily) which peers and members of the House of Commons were privileged to superscribe and send free of postage. A frank was an object with collectors of autographs, in the case of any man celebrated in public life, inasmuch as it was dated both as to time and place, and marked the whereabouts of the writer on a given day. I remember one especial frank in George Canning's beautiful handwriting. Every unfranked letter from the country then cost eight-pence, and double if enclosed in an envelope. Whenever, by mistake, a member of parliament

franked more than his ten letters in a day, the post-office was empowered to select the heaviest, and charge it. This brought into use a small morocco case, much like that in which people now keep their railway tickets. It could be carried in the waist-coat pocket, and contained a register to mark the number of franks given that day.

“It is needless to say that I remember every stage of the postal reductions : the fourpenny postage, which, according to croakers and ‘praisers of past days,’ was to ruin that branch of our finance ; then the arrival of the universal penny.

“I remember the streets of London lit with oil, when gas was invented indeed, but hardly creeping into use. A dismal place was this great metropolis by night, even without the visitation of a London fog. Those wretched oil contrivances twinkled, few and far between, through the long streets. You might be knocked down and robbed in the interval between leaving one lamp and arriving at another, without much help from the ‘Charlies’—time-honoured watchmen—who either snored in their watch-boxes, or slowly went their rounds, with staff and rattle and horn-lantern, scarcely dimmer than the oil. Sir Robert Peel had not yet replaced the ancient guardians of the night, by the

'force,' of which we now occasionally complain. There was still the barbarous custom in vogue of being awoke by them from time to time during the small hours with important news about the weather. It forms part of my early London impressions, as contrasted with the quiet of a night in the country ; and I can even now shut my eyes, and hear, 'in a dreamy way, those voices of the night that told of its being 'past twelve o'clock, and a frosty night,' or, 'half-past four, and a cloudy morning.'

"It was a grim English joke of the day, as against our Russian Allies in the great European war, at the close of which I was born, that when the Allied Sovereigns came over, some of the imperial body-guard of the Emperor of all the Russias climbed up the lamp-posts and drank the oil, as well as that which had been provided for the illuminations on that event ; leaving parts of London in darkness. It was, at least, made the subject of a popular ballad, which described how, when all the lamps were prepared for the display,

‘ ‘Tis said, the Cossacks
Made eleven attacks
To drink up the oil ere they lit them.’

"To return for a moment to the House of

Commons. I have been, as a boy, to debates in the old chapel of St. Stephen's, where unreformed members held forth in a quiet way. Not always with unbroken quietness, however ; for I have heard the sonorous voice of the Speaker, Manners Sutton, afterwards Lord Canterbury, calling ' Order, or—der !' with a dignified manner, which was his specialty. The place was rather dark and confined, with a sombre look from the wainscoting of ' Jacobean' oak, as church architects got into a mannerism of saying, twenty years ago. It had partly the character of a court of justice, partly of a college chapel, with the obvious exceptions to be made for both comparisons.

"A glance into the House of Lords showed me, about the same time, the peers of the date of Wellington's early administration ; and the bench of bishops, with those wigs that have long been departing one by one into the land of shadows. For a bishop to appear without a cauliflower wig—up to the moment when Dr. Blomfield, suffering from headaches, and possessing a fine forehead, discarded his wig resolutely, to the no small scandal of the hour—was as impossible as for a bishop to appear in his shirt-sleeves in place of his lawn. I cannot say whether deceased bishops were buried

in their wigs, or whether those insignia went as perquisites to the cathedral functionaries or upper servants, or remained as heir-looms in the diocese, or objects of veneration to the family. The question will never be asked to establish a precedent; for the episcopal wig itself has become a dead-and-buried institution.

"Having thus touched on dress, I pursue the topic with reference to the laity. The bishop's wig was really powdered, I believe, in the ancient days of which I speak. It was not the mere gray horse-hair which still adds dignity to the brow of chancellor, judge, and barrister. Powder at least lingered yet on the heads of some few gentlemen of the old school, like dubious patches of snow remaining in sheltered spots of an upland, while the advanced season has melted it from the neighbouring fields. It lingered on the venerable head of an unreformed M.P. well known to myself, who would as soon have thought of coming down unpowdered in the morning as unshaven. It was accompanied by its correlative pig-tail. A little tail, neatly tied with a black ribbon, depended over the collar of the coat, or the single collar of the full-dress velvet suit, with deep frill and ruffles. Aristocratic old days, compared with the free-and-

easy style of what Carlyle calls, I think, a sack and three seams, in which we brush along through our informal life.

"Or take the gentleman in the streets of London, as he exists in my childish remembrance, when Bond-street loungers were realities. What should we now think of a blue coat with plain brass buttons, a canary waistcoat of ample dimensions, large watch-seals from the fob, a cambric neck-cloth—well named—a couple of yards in length, wound round and round the throat of the unhappy wearer, as if with a settled purpose of suicide by strangulation (or murder, for it was done by the unhappy man's valet), or starched collars sawing his ears, reaching half-way up to his eyes? Yet this is not a caricature shown in Gillwray's shop-window in St. James'-street; quite the reverse, it is the gentleman lounger who is looking in at Gillwray's window, and laughing at the caricatures.

"I do not remember more than one pair of top-boots worn habitually, from the morning to the evening toilette; it was by a gentlemanly squire of good family in a southern county. But I am only just *unable* to remember one, with whose habits I am well acquainted, wearing them in London. A

sprinkling of hessians, *i.e.* boots more than half up to the knee, carved in a sort of *renaissance* style, with a tassel in front, was lingering, much like the powder. I must, however, record that not long ago I saw, with unfeigned surprise, a sight as unlooked-for as an invasion of London by the Hessian troops themselves. I saw a real live pair of these hessians walking on two feet in the neighbourhood of one of our London squares. What was more surprising still, in London, so intolerant of the slightest difference of dress, the undaunted wearer was not mobbed by the populace, but pursued the even tenor of his way.

“The ladies’ dresses? I must leave it to some faded and forgotten number of the *Courrier des Dames*, if that publication had crossed the Channel after the Peace, to describe the towering back-combs, pendant ear-rings, gigot sleeves, enormous bonnets and feathers. Thackeray gives a sketch of this which I could almost corroborate. Hoops had gone out, crinoline had not come in, trains were reserved for court and state.

“I have prosed like an old man about the dress of that date. We children were a race quite as much apart. I see no little boys now in

nankeen frocks with shoulder-ties of blue ribbon, or even with frills round their throats.

“I remember Exeter ‘Change, when it was a menagerie of lions feline, before it became Exeter Hall, the haunt of lions polemical. The Strand was then narrow, and the stoppage of carriages almost continual; and it was still further contracted by the wild-beast show. Here lived Chuny, the great elephant, who terminated his London career by a fit of furious madness, brought on by a broken tusk. His elephantine ravings and efforts to break the massive timber of his cage obliged his keepers to send for a sergeant’s guard of infantry with loaded muskets to despatch him; this was at length effected, amid the frantic roars of the other wild beasts around. I do not, however, recognise the description which Southey gives of the place, in ‘Espriella’s Letters,’ already quoted; and, but that he is a writer of much accuracy, I should suppose he was confusing the bazaar with the more modern Lowther Arcade.*

“Whatever the details of Exeter ‘Change, no

* “My way home . . . took me through a place called Exeter Change, which is precisely a *bazar*, a sort of street under cover, or large long room, with a row of shops on either hand, and a thoroughfare between them. . . . At the further end was a man in splendid costume, who proved to belong to a menagerie

one shall rob me or reason me out of the two stone giants, who used to strike the hours and the quarters on two big bells outside St. Dunstan's and *inside* Temple Bar. They used to attract a small crowd, especially at that time of day when the strokes were many, and worth waiting for. When the old church was pulled down, some rich man bought them, and put them up, I believe, at his place in the country, where they probably strike to this day.

“ I remember such things as Paddington coaches ; and also the coming in of the first omnibus. The coaches took their passengers into the City for a fare of five shillings, which was gradually lowered as ‘economy and retrenchment’ became the order of the day. Even the five-shilling arrangement was *infra dig.* for the merchant-princes of that period, who thought it incumbent on them to explain, whenever they had been detected in a

abovestairs. A macaw was swinging on a perch above him, and the outside of the building hung with enormous pictures of the animals which were there to be seen.”

In these days of gutta-percha and American over-shoes it is amusing to read the paragraph which follows the above extract. “ The oddest things which I saw in the whole walk were a pair of shoes in one window, floating in a vessel of water to show that they were waterproof,” &c. *Letters from England*, vol. i. pp. 82, 83.

Paddington coach, that some accident to the carriage, or other untoward cause, had occasioned it. The omnibus was at first called a *Shillibeer*, from the name of the importer; for it was an importation from Paris. Up to a later date were the *hackney-coaches*, which have now finally disappeared: lumbering, roomy vehicles, redolent of damp straw within, but garnished outside with the achievements and coronets of the noble families they had carried in palmier days. What connection they boasted with the (once) suburban village of Hackney, I remand to future antiquarians. The term, once established, was soon cut down into 'hack'; as hack-cabriolet, a poor hack; and the Shillibeer omnibus (whose plural, with those who studied elegance of speech, was supposed to be *omnibi*), became a 'bus,' and has so remained.

"The *cabs* of those days were anything but safety cabs; indeed, the significance of the term as applied to our present hansoms may be appreciated by those who have suffered from the gawky, perched-up, top-heavy machines in which your driver sat in a separate box by your side, without any real purchase on his horse. The first act of this vehicle, in the not unfrequent falls it sustained, was for the solid wooden apron, which

shut in the ‘fare,’ to fly open, resting on the back of the fallen horse; compelling the said fare, by the laws of the parabola, to find a place either on the horse’s neck or on the paved street. Such an event once befell myself in the middle of Cheapside, thronged with hoofs and wheels.

“I remember the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, when Mr. Huskisson was killed. Railroads have so completely altered the face of England, that the present generation can have but a feeble apprehension of the old coach system. There was an English heartiness about it, and a character of the picturesque, which has departed from the land. Nothing of the kind could be more exhilarating than to rattle in this way through some well-wooded district of England on a fine day; four thoroughbreds ready, waiting at the end of the stage, flowers stuck close to their little vixenish ears; the harness shining like the forks and spoons on my lord’s side-board, no discredit to the exquisite turn-out of the coachman himself. That coachman was a very Agamemnon, a king of men; a gentleman who had descended to the box, or a first-rate whip who had risen to it. He would cheerily entertain the passenger who shared his box (an

enviable distinction, secured by early application, not unaided by half-a-crown) on all passing topics ; the politics of the day, agricultural prospects, the pedigree, character, and vicissitudes of the families living near his line of road. There were two coachmen who drove first-rate Brighton coaches, the *Age*, I think, and the *Era*: little deeming that the next age and era would replace them by two grim and oily locomotives, the *Pluto*, say, and the *Phlegethon*. These two brothers (I believe) in blood, brothers certainly in the noble coachmanship whereby they witched the Surrey and Brighton world, were born to something better even than ‘ tooling’ their team along that dusty road at eleven miles an hour without breaking out of the trot. They started at the same moment, one from London, the other from Brighton, and so met half-way: somewhere about Reigate. It was a sight for any student of the grand and noble to see them meet, pull up, give the reins to their respective box-passengers, descend, shake hands, converse for a minute or so, then mount, and resume their way. There were other whip celebrities up and down England, each with his crack coach, some of them rattling through Oxford, quite up in University

topics. They are as completely gone as the charioteers of the Olympian or Isthmian games, whom Pindar sang.

"There were, however, abatements to this pleasant view of things. The exposure to cold and wet, on the top of the 'long staggers,' was severe and protracted. Whether outside or inside, the passengers were cramped and miserable enough before they reached the end of their wintry journey. More than once, the guard of the Western Mail has been found frozen to death after passing on a cold night over Salisbury Plain. And I myself, in a night coach from Liverpool to London, had the affliction of witnessing my fellow-passenger actually *die* on the seat before me; and was compelled to prop up the corpse with my hands for several miles, until we reached Barnet in the gray of the morning.

"I remember Catholic Emancipation, the rage excited in England against O'Connell, the meeting on Penenden Heath, the terrors of quiet, old-fashioned country gentlemen at the supposed results of passing the measure. A squire of that ancient school, maternally descended, to his no small satisfaction, from Oliver Cromwell, assured a circle of more or less incredulous listeners, myself

included, that if Catholics were emancipated, we should all be burnt in our beds. He may have been haunted by some retributive phantoms from Drogheda or Wexford : afraid of a Roland for his Oliver. Ballads were industriously sung to influence the public mind, full of misrepresentations of the belief and practice of those whose emancipation was in question. One of them I almost knew by heart as a child. It turned upon a travestie of Catholic practice so palpable that nothing but blind popular prejudice could have swallowed it. This wretched invention cropped up again under my very eyes the other day only, after nearly forty years—still sung, rehearsed, and believed. Such is the vitality of a courageous lie.

“In my boyish days, the penal code was one of great severity. The laws of England might truly be said to be written in blood. It was death to steal or poison a horse, death to steal or poison a mule, death to steal a sheep, death to steal anything to the value of twenty shillings, death to break into a house and steal to the value of five. Nowadays, the most atrocious murderers excite public sympathy, and find themselves the object of memorials to the Home-office, praying for *commutation of punishment*. To touch the shoulder of a

brutal garotter with the wholesome lash elicits an indignant remonstrance from the misplaced philanthropy that spares and fosters the criminal at the expense of his victim. Under that Poor-law which has replaced the old one of my remembrance, poverty has been made so truly a crime, and its punishment so severe, that we have paupers converting themselves into criminals, in order to gain a prison, as a more comfortable place than the Union workhouse. It is difficult to transport oneself back to the time when, after every Maidstone assizes, there were executions, not by twos or threes, for sheep-stealing. A gentleman farmer in Kent, whom I knew well, had imported some fine Spanish mules for the work of his farm. Several of these were poisoned by one of his farm-labourers ; I forget from what motive. His guilt was clearly brought home ; but the master, a tender-hearted man, declined to prosecute, for the consequence of conviction would have been certain execution.

“Am I not describing a state of things so remote, that you might fairly believe me more than fifty years old ?

“We who light our wax Vestas for a candle, or on the rare occasions when we would seal a letter ; we who strike our *briguet*s for our cigars, and are

annoyed at railway stations by little ragamuffins who offer us the newest thing in ‘light,’ can hardly realise the day when the old phosphorus-box was an improved invention. Yet I was living in a country-house when the first of them seen in that part of the world was brought down from London—no great distance—and was considered a chemical ingenuity. You had to thrust a match tipped with phosphorus into some mephitic compound in a small phial, and stir it about; poisoning the atmosphere of the drawing-room, together with an appreciable danger of explosion, and a chance of failure like that of the old ‘brown Bess,’ or regulation musket of the Peninsula, compared with the unerring breech-loader of our present Volunteers. The lucifer-match,’ which we have now discarded in its turn, came in quite later. And if you ask, What preceded the phosphorus-box? simply the *tinder*-box, which might have been in use among the Tudors, and which, I imagine, was found in the possession of one Guido Fawkes, in the vaults of Westminster, on a particularly dark November evening in the early years of James I.

“So I might go on, wandering up and down the maze of public events and domestic life. It is *a sign of old age to be garrulous*; which I would

jealously avoid, as I am neither more nor less than fifty. Others might furnish a more stirring chronicle, or a more minute. As it is, accept these chance records of one who has no great historical turn, and whose only claim upon your attention is that his voice will probably be sooner silenced than the rest."

"Now, papa!" cried Amy, "you come next.
What are you going to tell us about?"

And Sir Robert, settling himself comfortably,
responded to the call by

The Squire's Tale.

A TIPPERARY HARE.

"AFTER such thrilling stories, ladies and gentlemen, as you have listened to, mine will be likely to prove a tame affair. You must forgive me, in consideration of the poverty of my materials. What, except soup, can be made out of a hare? A rat, indeed, as we all lately acknowledged, is a formidable enemy, even when met by himself in a dark vault, and driven to bay; but when reinforced by numbers, a frightful one. The hero of my story, the poor hare, is of a more peaceful and timid nature, and you might suppose could only be an object of interest, or the theme of a story, in the actual chase and the huntsman's dinner after it. I am to try and show you the contrary; and I bespeak your attention even on behalf of a hare that was *supposed to be dead*.

"My friend Sir Phelim O'Leary was well known among the members of the subscription

pack of harriers that hunted the west of Tipperary. Sir Phelim was a hearty, jovial sportsman of the old school. Open-hearted was he, and open-handed, even to a fault: like too many an Irish landowner, squire, and squireen, he lived to enjoy the day, and bid Care take care of the morrow. It was in a former period in Ireland, when, the rebellion having been effectually quelled, the country was re-settled in its former security, and the gentry found leisure to pursue their wonted diversions. I will not, however, limit the pleasures of the Irish chase, nor my tribute in its favour, to the upper classes of society. The small farmer and the tenant entered into it with equal zest; and many is the heartburning among neighbours, the smouldering feud, the rankling spite, that has evaporated in the excitement of the hunt, and the wild halloo with which the excitable Tipperary boys follow the hounds after fox or hare.

“I cannot, of course, claim for the harriers of my friend Sir Phelim the dignity and preëminence of their nobler kindred, the fox-hounds. Yet, to those at least who are not mounted in first-rate style, there is in hare-hunting a greater variety in the unexpected turns and issues of the chase, a better keeping together and unity of dogs and

men, and a fairer chance of being in at the death than where an active fox goes straight away across country, as if he had been appointed surveying engineer for a new railroad, and is killed some dozen miles from the cover out of which he first sneaked away.

“ Leaving this debatable ground, I am to record that the last visit I paid to Ireland was for the express purpose of a little diversion with this same Tipperary pack. We started, one day, a hare which, for speed and success in escaping the hounds, had acquired a sort of local celebrity. ‘Brown Bess,’ as this nimble creature was called, led us a pretty dance that day, I well remember. But as it was among the most glorious runs in its long career, so it was doomed to be the last ; and at the end of an exciting chase, we had the satisfaction of returning to Sir Phelim’s hospitable mansion with Brown Bess slung at the huntsman’s saddle-bow to grace our triumph.

“ The day had been raw and wet, or what is called in Ireland ‘soft weather.’ We were glad to troop into the kitchen, where, before a rousing fire, great preparations were going on for an extensive hunting dinner. Sir Phelim being a *bachelor*, his establishment partook of that pecu-

liarly helter-skelter and makeshift character which is only reducible to order under the firm though gentle influence which he had never summoned to his aid. No lady presided over his household, and in consequence everything went wrong. Wrong, shall I say? Nay, though no casuist, I suppose that is no wrong which offends against no law; and order, quietness, and regularity had never been the object of domestic legislation with Sir Phelim, or with any of the O'Learys before him, beyond the memory of man. Then, too, the influence of Father Mick, the good parish priest, was sufficient to prevent any grave moral disorder among the motley hangers-on and whippers-in. So there was nothing worse than bustle, confusion, noises discordant and confused, orders and counter-orders self-conflicting; the cook in a passion, the gossoon in despair, the helper running everywhere and helping nobody, and everyone else hilarious, loquacious, and uproarious. ‘Arrah, get out o’ that intirely! ‘Aisy now, can’t ye?’ ‘Be off wid yerself, ommadawn!’ in which no harm was expressed, and less intended, were about the gravest features in that motley and bustling scene.

“So, when the whole hunt crowded into the cheerful kitchen, the cracking of whips and jingle

of spurs and yelp of hounds outside, joined with the Babel of loud tongues and laughter within, increased a noise which in those culinary regions had long reigned as the normal condition of things. Sir Phelim and his friends were elated at the events of the day's hunt, the finest run that had been known for some time in that part of Tipperary; and the poor hare, that had been so unwilling an agent in the day's diversion, now stretched on a dresser near the window, was regarded with much interest, and even respect."

"Respect, papa!" interrupted Amy; "they ought to have pitied it, poor thing! lying there all dead."

"How do you know it was all dead?" answered Sir Robert; "that is the very point of my story; let me go on. Yes, though no one dropped a tear of pity over poor puss, and though the cook was at that moment advancing with a carving-knife to commence the prelude for 'jugging' Brown Bess, yet the victim was looked at by those who surrounded the dresser with the admiration due to one who has fought gallantly for life. As to Sir Phelim,

'The chieftain mark'd, and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise;
And that stern joy that warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.'

“I have told you, the dresser on which the hare lay was placed near the window. I beg your particular attention to that circumstance. The house being a bachelor’s house, the windows were privileged to be somewhat out of repair. A goodly proportion of the panes up and down the mansion were cracked or fairly broken out; and a large pane of the kitchen-window, on a level with the dresser, was in the latter condition. There was a hole through which any hare of sense and spirit would have jumped in a twinkling.

“Now, as Brown Bess lay there within easy spring of that window, it was remarked by several observers that its wide full eyes did not seem to be so much glazed in death as might be expected; and the active, springy limbs, too, looked as if they could gather themselves up in a moment—and away !”

The Squire raised his voice almost to a halloo when he reached this point of his story, so as to startle some of his audience, and to wake up one or two others of the circle round the fire. The crisis of the tale was come; and his hearers, with various degrees of interest, begged him to continue.

“Pray remark,” he said, looking round, “how

near the dresser is to the window ; how large the hole is in the nearest pane ; how active and supple looks the hare that was supposed to be dead ; how some of those who looked hardly believed it *was* dead, after all. Just at this moment—”

He stopped ; all eyes were fixed on him. The story, though only about a hare, had wound his audience up to some expectation. Whether because prisoners will take interest in anything, however trivial, that relieves the monotony of their durance, or from his manner of narrating it ; so it was.

“ At this moment, I say, the cook came forward with a carving-knife. There was no one standing between the dresser and the window. The eyes of the hare were open, seemed wide awake. The knife was lifted in the air, so—”

The Squire lifted his cigar-case with an emphatic gesture.

“ Well,” said Amy, shaking his knee, “ well, papa ?”

“ The light from the kitchen-fire gleamed on the blade, so—”

He struck the *briquet*, and calmly proceeded to light his cigar.

“ Well ?” said the Captain, in spite of his habitual nonchalance.

The Squire enjoyed a gentle puff or two.

"Well? well?" echoed the Nabob, on the verge of being testy; "don't keep us waiting. What happened then?"

"Then," answered Sir Robert, with much calmness, while a gentle wreath from his cigar floated slowly towards the roof of the guest-room, "the hare was jugged, and proved excellent."

"Jugged!" cried everyone except Lady Enshawe, who had heard the story before; "then it really *was* dead after all?"

"Certainly," said the Squire between very deliberate puffs; "how should it have been anything else, after that day's run?"

"Bah!" said the Nabob, after a pause; "we seem doomed to stories that end in nothing. I confess to having led off in that direction. My tiger took himself away just when the catastrophe required him to remain. But, as the old Duke of Wellington used to say, after the highest efforts of the London concerts, 'I like music that has a *toone* in it;' so say I; I like a story that has an end to it. I hope, Miss Dunbar," added the Nabob,

addressing the niece, whose turn came next, "that your contribution to our picnic will progress in an orderly manner, and come to a satisfactory end. Why, we might have written Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas*, with its 'conclusion, in which nothing is concluded.'"

"To say the truth," returned the young lady, "that was the very point on which I was getting anxious. I can offer to the picnic only another fragment. Certainly, if anyone were to collect all our present efforts at amusement, people might fairly quote Shakespeare against him, and say: 'He has been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.'"

"Well, Augusta," said Sir Robert, "let us have this said fragment; I daresay it will prove a gem worthy of being fitted in among our tesselated productions."

"That is more than I can pretend," answered Miss Dunbar. "It is but a commencement of something which I jotted down on a vacant afternoon, two years ago, after having mused among the ruins of the Via Sacra. Why it was never finished is more easily explained than why it was ever begun. Only, no one resident in Rome, even for a time, can fail to be struck by the way in which

Christianity has come in to inherit the old waste places of Paganism ; and has overthrown the iron despotism of the Cæsars to plant its own benign influence in its stead. May I quote a page from a living author, which I find in my note-book ? ‘ It was accounted a folly, yet it became the belief of the noblest cultivators of the human intellect ; a slavish weakness, yet it overran the earth, and fixed its cross on the diadem of emperors ; a mere offshoot of Judaism, yet it threw wide its arms and embraced Jew and Gentile, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free.’ This was the sort of idea my brother George and I had intended to work out in dialogue ; for I am indebted to him for any *spirit* it may possess, and for the classical allusions, which are beyond me. Altogether, the poor scrap stands beside that great truth as the sailor’s rattan (so somebody says), stuck into the sand at Alexandria, stood upright beside Pompey’s pillar. It can only be taken as any measure of it by the proportionate and diminutive shadow it casts ; and that is a very small one.”

So saying, the young lady produced her Ms. with a quiet remark, that the infliction on her hearers’ patience would at least be brief.

The Niece's Ms.

A FRAGMENT FROM PAGAN ROME.

*An inner apartment in the mansion of the Senator
POMPONIUS, father of FULVIA, near the Via Sacra.*

PLAUTILLA.

You never told me, Fulvia, how it ended,
That strange discourse, from which I broke away,
As wearied by its length ; yet the words tended
To after-thought : what went he on to say,
Your old Jew captive with a yellow turban,
Who brought the dish of figs from uncle Urban ?

FULVIA (*her cousin*).

Well, they *were* startling words : but then his nation,
Strange (as you know) in feature, customs, tongue,
Dreams ever of a thing they call *salvation*,—
Rescue, that is ; a kind of growing young

For those old slaves, back in their ancient home ;
And, of course, freedom from the arm of Rome.

PLAUTILLA (*laughs*).

A pretty notion, truly !

FULVIA.

Yet I wonder

From what deep source of trust they nurse it still.
Our conquering legions got them fairly under,
Ground in the very dust their stubborn will ;
Briefly, effac'd them ; yet from out that dust
“Messias !” sounds, their ancient cry and trust.

SALOME, a Christian slave, comes in with refreshments.

PLAUTILLA.

Messias ? What means that ?

FULVIA.

Nay, you shall answer,
Salome : bring your old Jew-fashion'd lute ;
I never could enlist you as a dancer ;
Too grave for that, child : but you can't be mute
When Sion's hymns are asked for. Aye, they glisten,
Those coal-black eyes, now ! Well, we're here to
listen.

SALOME.

How, lady, shall the captive sing

In foreign land her native songs ?
 Her hand droops heavy on the string ;
 Her voice is chok'd with weight of wrongs
 That round the heart like death-weeds cling.
 No ! music to the blest belongs ;
 'Tis the warm heart's glad offering
 For prosper'd state, for sunlit hours ;
 It stirs the balmy wreaths of spring,
 Steals through the mellow'd autumn bowers,
 And revels blithe mid birds and flowers.
 Some other service, lady, crave ;
 Demand not gladness from the slave.

FULVIA.

Gladness, poor chit ! Then mournful be the mea-
 sure.
 Of Sion somewhat breathe, however sad :
 Canst sing no hopes ? Well, sing to do me plea-
 sure ;
 For a slave-owner, girl, I'm not so bad.

SALOME.

Yes ! brooding silence is my cherish'd mood ;
 But lute and voice shall wake to gratitude.

[*Tunes her lute, and sings.*

On Thee we wait ; Deliverer, hail !
Sion's 'lorn children wait Thine hour :

Though distant yet, though faint and pale,
 'Twill dawn, 'twill rise, Thy orient power!
 With trust unchang'd by age, by clime,
 Exiles and slaves, we wait Thy time.

PLAUTILLA.

A cheering hope, indeed! Should Rome, now,
 totter—

(False be such omen), I should deem all gone :
 That each insurgent fierce or factious plotter
 Could mount, or overset, her stately throne ;
 For nations, once declining, rise no more ;
 And no Messias may their youth restore.

TRUDA (*enters with a low obeisance*).

Ioch Fräulein's Wagen bei de Pallast is :
 But Wagen-meister sagt, dass donner-wetter
 Kommt surely.

PLAUTILLA.

Why, what gibberish is this?

FULVIA.

[y latest purchase ;—Dacian—knows no better ;
 thousand pranks and services she's pat in,
 ut her rude north-tongue can't accomplish Latin.
 o, child, command the chariot home again ;
 shall not drive this afternoon.

TRUDA.

Sehr wohl. [Exit.]

FULVIA.

How is't with you, Plautilla? To be plain,
 The Jewish maiden's hymn weighs on my soul:
 It speaks to One unseen; it yearning cries
 That He should come,—Who come? What vague
 surmise!

PLAUTILLA.

Clear up the mystery, maid. To me it seems
 Mere fancy-picturing of Jewish dreams,
 Much as Greek sages taught of Orpheus' strain:
 Fables! what further? touch thy lute again.

SALOME (*plays and sings*).

This earth grows old, and all its might
 Before Thy rule shall pass away:
 Weak shows the strongest in Thy sight,
 Its iron limbs, its feet of clay!
 Come, Lord! come, reign from shore to shore;
 Thy throne exalt for evermore!

CRASSA (FULVIA'S aunt, who has entered during the song).

Out on ye, Jewess!—Fulvia, how is this?
 Permit your slave to utter traitorous words
 While you sit there? I call it flat rebellion

'Gainst Cæsar, and the Genius of great Rome.
None other sovereign owns this empire stern ;
No weaker hand may curb the spirit free
Of those who date from Fabius and the Gracchi ;
Nay, if I hear aright, this very day—

POMPONIUS (*comes in with a parchment*).

Another edict ! [reads]

Ay, 'tis sharp and plain,

'Tis root-and-branch work this—means, “Rend
and burn 'em !”

Fools ! to draw down these penal laws again
On their devoted heads ! but none can turn 'em ;
Chrestians,* good simpletons, count losses gain,
Court these fresh edicts—do their best to earn 'em :
I'm sick of Christians—questions—don't like pain,
Don't like to see it—one can't quite unlearn 'em,
Those shows—they spoil my supper : here again,
We've “Christians to the lions,” *in æternum* :—
I won't go near the games, until there's been a
Sweep of this whole thing clean from the arena.

* This play upon the word ‘Christian,’ and upon the name of our Lord, was frequent among the heathen ; probably among those of Antioch (Acts xi. 26) ; and is alluded to in a favourable sense by the early apologists for the faith. *Xρηστὸς*, as meaning a good and innocent person, was easily perverted, by an unfriendly interpretation, into a simpleton. See Cornel. a Lap. in Acts xi. 26.

PLAUTILLA.

Why, uncle, what has chanc'd?

CRASSA.

I came to tell you,
 Hasten'd on purpose : out this morning's edict
 Comes, like a batch hot from the public bak'ry ;
 Couch'd in the pitliest phrase and most emphatic :
 Each householder, when round the little statue
 Of Jupiter, or Mars, or Rome, is carried,
 Must see that all his family, slave or free-born—
 (Slaves ! Ay, of course ; *you* come in there, Sa-
 lome—)
 Offers a pinch of incense.

PLAUTILLA.

Well, that's easy.

POMPONIUS.

No great harm there : a simple, outward act,
 Forcing no real assent ; mere smoke, in fact,
 Demanded by the State—so, in Rome's name
 We take the pinch, and cast it on the flame.
 I may be Tuscan all the while, or Jew,
 Anything, nothing : hold all worships true,
 Or none—what matters ? for “the tongue,” as plain
 Old Ennius says, “may swear, the mind unsworn
 remain.”

FULVIA.

hardly like that ; age can ne'er be youth,
Nor darkness, light : can falsehood then be truth ?

POMPONIUS.

poke like a Sibyl, child : but Truth is—where ?

CRASSA.

'ou're half a Christian, Fulvia, I'll declare :
hat's just the way they talk.

POMPONIUS (*slowly*).

Talk ? ay ; and mark
My word ; they'll *do*, nay, *die* for't : those same dark
kulkers in tombs and sand-pits, from their den
Once well unearth'd, know how to die like men !

“ *Latebrosa et lucifugax natio*,” said the college fellow musingly, when the young lady had ceased reading : “ that expression of Tacitus about the early Christians is well rendered, Miss Dunbar, by your ‘dark skulkers in tombs and sand-pits.’ But I think, instead of Ennius, you should have aid Euripides.”

“ Oh, George is responsible for all that sort of thing, as I have said,” she replied, laughing, to Lady

Enshawe ; "you remember, he was fresh from his degree when he joined papa and me in Rome."

"The tombs and sand-pits meaning, I presume, the Catacombs ?" pursued the Cambridge Don.

"Yes," said Miss Dunbar. "So far, at least, I can understand what he wrote. We went down into the Catacomb of St. Agnes : and I remember he showed me that the crypts and cemeteries had been excavated in a stratum of coarse sandy rock, below the sand-pits (*arenaria*, I think you would call them ?) which lead down to those dark cradles of the new-born faith."

"And the mode of working the two," quietly put in the Student, when he found that nobody took up the subject, "differed much, and naturally. The object in working the sand-quarry was to extract the greatest amount of material ; so the excavations were made as broad as consisted with safety : while in hewing the catacomb out of the living rock below, the hardness of the volcanic stratum, and the difficulty of disposing of the débris, at that depth, and in times of persecution and concealment, made the subterranean architects careful to cut their sepulchral passages as narrow as possible."

"We must go and see the Catacombs," said

Sir Robert good-humouredly, "to verify the description of this learned lady."

"I assure you," said Miss Dunbar, "there are few things in Rome I would more gladly revisit."

The Danish merchant had been for some time in evident perplexity, hard put to it to arrange his story in a consecutive form. Nevertheless, when he was notified to him that his turn was come, he faced his difficulties like a man; and in a kind of matter-of-fact, business-like way, as if he was checking an invoice, or answering a correspondent, he thus began, after making a bow to the ladies :

The Danish Merchant's Legend.

THE RIVAL ARMOURERS.

"THIS is really and truly the only story I know. Once there lived two celebrated armourers, the best in all the region of the Baltic, perfect masters in the art of working iron and steel. One of them was named Olaf, the other Thorsen. They were in great request whenever armour was to be forged for knights and men-at-arms ; for they could temper weapons to be exceedingly hard and keen. Those were the early days, when warfare consisted in hacking and hewing with ponderous swords and battle-axes against suits of chain or plate armour. But it was not always the strongest hand or the most swinging blow that decided a conflict ; much also depended on the temper of the weapons of offence and defence. A keener edge in a practised hand could find its way between the joints of the knight's harness, or even shear through it,

where a duller weapon failed. And the helmet, the breastplate, or cuisses of lighter make, if tempered by a master's art, could sustain a stroke that would have been fatal to weightier armour, if less skilfully wrought.

"In consequence of this difference between weapon and weapon, it was the care of knights and their esquires to secure the aid of armourers who were most famous in their craft. In our modern days, they who are at strife retain the professional services of some able lawyer, and trust to the astuteness and keen searching logic of their counsel or attorney for the success of their cause. So, in those days of physical force, when battle was waged not by pens and parchment and tongue, but by brass and steel, the smith, or armourer, may be called the solicitor in those courts where force of arms was the only admitted plea.

"Many a knock-down argument and resistless home-thrust had thus been supplied to plaintiff and defendant by Olaf on one side, and Thorsen on the other. At length, having beaten all other candidates for what may be called the head of their profession, they came to regard each other as personal rivals, and even foes. It was hard for the most practised swordsman to decide on the preëminence

of one of these skilful workmen over the other. Trials had often been made, in tilt-yard and in hall, on chopping blocks, and on wooden figures cased in armour. But though many noble knights and stout esquires declared for Olaf, an equal number voted the palm to Thorsen. The parties on either side ran high, and it became almost a feud in the ranks of chivalry: but the general opinion at length inclined to determine that Olaf was more eminent for the edge and temper of his blades, and Thorsen for the resistance of his polished breastplates, shields, and cuisses.

“At length, nothing would satisfy the contending smiths, nor the patrons and adherents of each, but a personal trial of the qualities of their weapons on either side. Who, it was asked, could be more fit to test the arm, than the armourer who had forged it? So lists were erected, as for a tilt, or trial by battle; and a great concourse of knights and warriors assembled to witness the contest. This was at Uddevalla, beyond the frontiers both of Norway and Denmark. For I forgot to say, that national pride was added to the personal animosity of these rivals: Olaf being a Norseman, and Thorsen a Dane.

“On the day appointed, the contending parties

stepped into the lists. Both were exceedingly strong and muscular to behold. And first was brought a helmet, forged by some other armourer, one Povelsen, of Helsingborg, who had no mean repute for his skill. All admired its workmanship and high polish : but when it was laid on a block in the midst, Thorsen upheaved one of his swords, and with a mighty blow clove the helmet half-way down to the visor, so that any knight wearing it must have been left dead in the lists. Then came Olaf, and with a blow across the other's, with one of his best-tempered swords, clove the helmet throughout, so that the two pieces fell asunder. The same did they to three helmets by different armourers. Afterwards a heavy steel anvil was brought, into which the swords of both armourers bit, but that of Olaf bit an inch deeper than the sword of Thorsen.

"Then a steel purse made by Olaf, of small rings cunningly twined together, was thrown into the air : Thorsen caught it with his sword as it fell, and cut it through twice, so that the rings flew asunder on all sides. Then Olaf took a skein of spun wool, hanging loose, and shore through it with his sword. But Thorsen shore through another skein with a back-stroke from a double-edged sword of his smithy. After this, Olaf pierced

with his sword's point a ball of spun wool floating in water ; and Thorsen, on his part, did the like. At length, victory all this while hanging doubtful between them, there was brought a branch of juniper with two cobwebs which spiders had spun across it from point to point. Then Olaf chose out a new sword which he had tempered with his utmost skill, and with a swift stroke he shore through one of the cobwebs, so that he left both ends of it hanging on the spray. Then Thorsen, also choosing a new sword, essayed to do the like with the remaining cobweb : but he only cut some strings of the web, and dragged it away from the branch on his blade.

“ On this the spectators rose, and shouted in praise of Olaf, decreeing the victory to him. And the judge of the trial, an ancient Swedish knight, held forth to him the prize, which was a cap of twisted steel and silver, as flexible as silk, and placed it on his head. But the Danish knights were grieved when they saw their champion vanquished : yet could they not gainsay the sentence. As for Thorsen, when he saw the cap of victory on his rival's head, he grew mad with jealous fury ; and he dared Olaf to abide a stroke from *him in the best armour he had ever forged.*

"Olaf, on his part, was willing, and stepped forward to arm himself for this contest of life or death. But there came between them an ancient holy pilgrim, who on his journey had passed by the lists, and stayed to see the trial of skill. He besought them to be content, and not push the contest further: that both of them had shown exceeding skill, and both had won honour for themselves and their nations. That no man had a right to peril his own life, or the life of his fellow-man, without some urgent cause; that religion forbade even tournaments and passages of arms with sharp weapons, or any such risks, except for the training of youth for lawful war; that the duel, when not an ordeal, was a thing to be abhorred by all Christian men:—with much more to the same purpose. All this availed nothing with the furious Thorsen, who seemed to be possessed by an evil spirit of revenge. He dared Olaf again to the trial of life and death, and denounced him as a coward if he refused. This roused the spirit of Olaf; so that he, too, disregarded the counsels of the ancient man, who in much sorrow retired from the lists.

"Then all was prepared for this last trial: the two *armourers* were clad in complete harness of

proof from their own forges, and armed with their own best swords. It was agreed that each should abide three strokes from the other: the stroke to be given by each in turn. However, it need not so many. The first stroke was to be determined by lot, and the lot fell to Thorsen. Therefore gave his sword to an esquire in wait, and stood upright to abide the stroke of his enemy.

"Now it chanced that Olaf, as he rode in the morning to the lists, had met by the wayside an old and poor man, to whom he had given alms. The old man blessed him, and prayed that he might be delivered out of his next danger. When Olaf stood in the lists, as I have been awaiting the blow, he raised his heart to God and asked that the old man's prayer might be fulfilled for him. This he did, knowing that he had gaged in a sinful act by exposing his life, and that he was going to put the life of Thorsen in danger; so he dared not pray for himself.

"Thorsen now stepped back, and with a strength swung his sword round, and delivered a swift blow at Olaf. The good sword bit into the iron armour of proof, and gashed Olaf's side, so that the blood sprang forth. But it seemed to Thorsen as though he felt the great smart of his wound.

some hand he could not see had stayed the sword from wounding him deeper. So he laughed in defiance at Thorsen, who cast down his looks as one disappointed of his wish.

“Then, in his turn, Thorsen stood upright to abide the stroke. Olaf stepped back, and put forth his whole strength to strike it. So clean did the sword pass through Thorsen's armour and Thorsen's body, that he knew not what had befallen him : and though he tottered for a moment, he stood there upright before Olaf.

“‘How is it with thee?’ cried the judge of the lists to Thorsen ; ‘what didst thou feel?’

“Thorsen made answer, ‘I felt as it were the whistling of an icy wind that blew swiftly upon me, and as though needles of frost had shot into the backbone through mine armour.’

“‘Bow thy head, then, to the judge,’ cried Olaf, almost swooning with loss of blood : ‘for if thou hast ’scaped unhurt, the prize is thine.’ And Thorsen bowed his body ; and that moment it parted asunder in the middle, and the two cleft portions lay in the lists, and his soul was before a greater Judge than the Swedish knight at Uddevalla. And Olaf also lay beside him, half dead.”

“*But not dead in half,*” interrupted Amy, who

had followed the story with open mouth, and all eyes.

“No,” answered the Danish merchant gravely, “that was, no doubt, his advantage. It was some time, however, before he recovered his great wound, for the sword had bit in deep enough ; and though it was, like Mercutio’s, ‘not as deep as a well, nor as wide as a church-door,’ it almost did for him.

“On his lingering sick-bed he made a solemn vow, that if health were restored to him, he would make a pilgrimage to the shrine of his great namesake, St. Olave the Martyr, in the cathedral of Drontheim. This he happily performed, and suspended beside the altar the sword with which he had slain his rival Thorsen. But not content with this act of thanksgiving for his escape, he afterwards entered, as a lay brother, the monastery adjoining the cathedral, and there lived and died in a spirit of great penance.

“So, at least, says an ancient Ms. taken from the chapter-house at Drontheim, with many other marvels, compiled by one of the community, who lived at least a century after the events. The *Life of Olaf the Armourer*, extracted from this Ms. volume by some careful transcriber, was afterwards printed in black letter, ran through several

editions, and became a popular reading-book in schools for the middle classes in Denmark. It is added by a later hand, that the swords forged by Olaf continued to maintain their celebrity long after he had retired from the world; and that some may still be met with in museums and galleries of ancient armour, not in Norway alone, but in other parts of Europe. One of them (though its authenticity is disputed) is said to be shown in the Imperial Ambras collection in Vienna.

"Thus, ladies and gentlemen," concluded the Danish merchant, "I have endeavoured to reproduce my boyish memories of a story for your entertainment; and it is, I again assure you, the only one I know. I sometimes recal it even now, with a certain wistfulness, when my razors are out of order."

The Danish merchant received due thanks for his contribution to the common stock. It derived, indeed, something from the matter-of-fact simplicity of his manner.

"But there is one thing in your story," said Sir Robert, "which requires explanation, and admits of it, I daresay, better than the marvellous por-

tions. Why, at the end, did you change the name Olaf into Olave?"

"To secure greater interest among my English hearers," answered the Danish merchant, with a formal bow.

"How so?" asked several of the audience at once.

"It is the same name," he said. "Olave is the English form. You have a church in your city of London, St. Olave's, in the Jewry, called after St. Olaus, or Olaf, the great martyr of Norway. This name, indeed, is one of the many links which bind the present English race to its Scandinavian ancestors. As a Lutheran in religion, I do not value, as others may, the old ecclesiastical union between the two countries; but I honour the name of St. Olave as that of a great king, and a martyr for what he believed to be the only truth."

"A martyr?" asked the Captain, with something that approached a well-bred sneer.

"A martyr," persisted the merchant sturdily. "He perished in a just warfare against his idolatrous subjects, who had resented the charitable efforts he had made to introduce among them *the light of Christianity*. And this, after he had

succeeded in establishing the Gospel, not only in Norway, but in the Orkneys, and even in Iceland. Is not such a man to be honoured?"

"And so he was, in England," said the young student, with some hesitation, which was only that of

"Ingenui vultus puer, ingenuique pudoris,"

"until the fatal time when men learned to dis honour what their ancestors had revered."

"You mention St. Olave's," remarked the college Fellow; "but the church so called is not the only memorial we possess in London of that distinguished man."

"Ay?" said the Dane; "where else does his name survive?"

"In Tooley-street," answered the Cambridge Don quietly.

"Tooley-street?" laughed out the Nabob; "why, you will next give us a classical explication of the Seven Dials!"

"It is even so, however," replied the other. "St. Olave was familiarly known to our ancestors as St. Tooley; just as Antony becomes Tony, St. Vedast, or Vedaster, lives on in the surname Foster, or (in my own University) St. Mary's Hall is *vulgarised into Skimmery.*"

"Or Magdalen, Maudlin," said Sir Robert; "for I wore a silk gown once in those cloisters in the sister seat of learning."

"Whence, maudlin tears, I suppose," added the Nabob.

"There is no limit to derivations and corruptions of names," observed Captain Harris. "What say you to *goblin*, which came to mean a spectre, I take it, from the lank limbs and ghostly forms and faces of the personages worked in the old Gobelin tapestry?"

"Or to *fiacre*," added the student, "which has become an ordinary term for a carriage hired in the streets of Paris? It is, in truth, the name of a Saint, Fiaker or Fefre, who migrated from Ireland to France in the seventh century, and continued in such honour in the diocese of Meaux, that the crowds of pilgrims coming from Paris to his shrine, caused his name to be applied to the vehicles that brought them."

"Your derivation of *goblin*, Captain," began the college Fellow, with a quiet smile, "can hardly be admitted; though the name is certainly of French origin. It is true that Jean, surnamed the Gobelin, was known as a weaver and dyer in Paris as early as 1450; but he obtained that nick-

name from his turn for practical jokes, which seemed to ally him with the *gobelins*, a race of elves known through several provinces of Gaul. They were neither so malicious as the fairies, nor so hostile to man as the darker and more demoniacal spirits. Their greatest offence consisted in misleading travellers by night. When the phrase passed into England, our ancestors prefixed the familiar name Hob, *i.e.* Robin: rather a strange proceeding, as the characteristic of an elf or sprite seems to be, that it is a soul unbaptised. Thus modified, the name expresses a certain friendly familiarity, a good understanding between the sprite and the being of flesh and blood, which allies Hob-goblin with Robin-Goodfellow and Jack-o'-Lantern; or rather, with the Brownies of Scotland, and with the domestic or 'lubber-fiend' mentioned by Milton, who sweeps up the hearth and puts the place in order, on condition of your leaving him a bowl of milk for his supper. Hence, perhaps, to *gobble*, or take food voraciously."

In short, the college Fellow now began to look dangerous, as a man who, booted and spurred, was on the point of mounting his hobby and riding it in full career. Had he done so, we might have spared our readers the remainder of

our chronicles : for an etymologist and antiquarian is endless when he once begins.

A general sense of the impending danger pervaded the company. Nothing is so persevering as a silent man who suddenly emerges into talk ; and on the principle of Greek meeting Greek, all eyes were now turned on the *Italian Improvisatore*.

The Improvisatore had been waiting with impatience for his turn ; and needed no second invitation. Bowing to the company with supple Italian grace, he threw himself into an attitude, and casting up his eyes to the ceiling, as if to collect his thoughts, a process quite needless to one so ready, after a moment he thus began, in a kind of dithyrambic strain :

The Italian's Prologue.

'FAIN would I summon the four elements around me, to entertain my honoured audience. I would draw contributions from the air above, the waters broad, the earth beneath our feet; I would bid them furnish each a topic to awaken interest in these noble captives, whom air and water have combined to fetter on this spot of earth, till the returning fire of the sun's rays shall unbind their fates, and smile their glad release. Had I an ichanter's power, then the air in its wayward flight, the fire with vivid brilliancy and life, the waters with their fantastic play and hidden gems, the earth with those deep secret treasures it contains, should, at a sweep of my wand, unite to pour their accumulated tribute at the feet of the fair, the noble, and the brave."

The Improvisatore paused, and looked round him; but instead of the *evvivas* and *bravi* which in

his native land might have greeted such an effusion, he met rather a cold response in the looks of his audience. This prologue to his tale was evidently not suited to their taste. With ready tact, he saw he had tuned his lyre a note too high; and descended, unabashed, to a more ordinary style.

“ In the latticed balcony of his summer palace at Grand Cairo,” continued the Improvisatore, “ sate the Pasha of Egypt. Propped on the silken cushions of his divan, fanned with ostrich-feathers by attendant slaves, he enjoyed the evening breeze, which began faintly to ruffle the waters of the Nile. Rich awnings protected him from the sun’s rays; and it was a dreamy pleasure to watch the light skiffs that shot like water-flies across the stream, or the larger boats of traffic, lazily breasting the current on their upward course towards the distant cataracts.

“ Weary at length of this listless employment: ‘ Go,’ said the Pasha to one of his officers; ‘ take soldiers, and descend to the nearest gate of the city. Arrest the first travellers that enter in, and bring them hither.’

“ ‘ To hear is to obey,’ answered the officer, touching his forehead, his eyes, and his breast. He went forth, and soon returned with four persons,

who had passed through the gate together, and whom he had arrested accordingly. They were a merchant from Tunis, a Greek renegade returning from Alexandria, a dervish who had been to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca, and an English sailor belonging to a frigate which lay at anchor off the mouths of the Nile.

“When these four came into the presence of the Pasha, the three first prostrated themselves in the Oriental fashion ; and the sailor made his best bow after the peculiar fashion of his calling. All had left their shoes at the door of the saloon, the sailor being hardly persuaded to part with his.

“The Pasha stroked his beard as he surveyed the new-comers. Then, turning his eyes to the window, he contemplated the Nile, the plains beyond it, and the burning sun, while the cool air fanned his cheek. After a pause he said: ‘Strangers, my will is, that you each relate to me a tale, about one of the four elements. Let your narrations be wonderful, and such as I have never heard. Satisfy me in this, and I will dismiss you with a rich reward. Refuse, or tell me a tale that hath no interest, and you shall be bow-strung on the spot.’ The Pasha here drew his finger across his throat.

“To be brief, the prisoners (for so indeed they

were), after consulting in a whisper, as to which element should fall to the lot of each, and who was to begin, signified to the Pasha that they were ready to obey his commands. The Tunis merchant then stepped forward, and prostrating himself anew, forthwith commenced:

The Horse and his Rider.

WATER.

“Know, illustrious Pasha,” he began, “that some twelve days’ journey hence, towards the setting sun, once lay a kingdom of civilised men. They were shut out from the rest of the world, and from the tribes of barbarous *Æthiopians* who surrounded them, by a range of lofty mountains encircling their land. This country consisted of one rich and wide valley, with a fertile soil, watered in abundance by five copious streams which descended into it from the mountains around. It was called the kingdom of Agad-berek.

“The five streams united towards the south-east of the kingdom; and, after forming a lake, famed for the excellence and quantity of its fish, *they poured themselves in one river through a cleft*

in the mountains, which was supposed to conduct it at length to form a tributary of the Nile. This cleft, by which the river issued forth, was so narrow, and the rocks on either side were worn so smooth and precipitous by the water, that the men of Agad-berek were at no pains to fortify this only approach to their valley ; being always persuaded that the river, rushing along with force, and filling the entire channel of the outlet, was defence enough. In truth, no enemy had ever attempted to penetrate into this fertile region ; and for many centuries all went on in quietness. Kings were born and reigned, lived and died, and were succeeded by their sons, and were carried with many ceremonies up the mountains that surrounded the vale, and buried with their fathers in the royal tombs, hewn out in the highest rocks.

“ Nevertheless, from ancient custom rather than for defence, a small guard-house, that had been built in past ages near the river's outlet, was kept in repair, and a watch of soldiers stationed there every night. One night the sentinel on guard thought he heard the tramp of a horse coming up through the cleft. He listened attentively, yet believed that his ear had deceived him ; since there was, as I have said, no footing for the most skilful

climber along the channel, far less a bridle-path for any horse. But in a few moments he heard the tramp of the horse more and more distinct, and his snortings louder and nearer. By the light of the moon he could see a rider mounted on a noble black steed, who was riding at a good pace upon the surface of the river, which rang under his horse's hoofs, as though it had been of hard and polished crystal. The sentinel, astonished at such a sight, ran into the guard-house to call out the guard; but before he had roused them to come forth, the horse and rider had passed more than a bow-shot up the river towards the city, still trampling upon the water as upon a hard substance. The guard, unprovided with horses, and having strict orders not to leave their post, could do no more than send on the sentinel, who had seen this sight, to follow to the capital at his best speed. Though he did this with all diligence, he could not reach the city, for very weariness, till the sun had risen over the mountains.

“ Meanwhile, O Pasha, the horseman had performed his journey at the same rapid pace as he had used before; and day had scarcely broken when he drew bridle in the outer court of the king's palace. Among all who were waiting for *the inner gates* to be opened, there was not one

who did not admire the noble black horse, and wonder by what means his rider had penetrated into the kingdom of Agad-berek. I must inform your Excellency that the horses of that country were a race of poor and sorry jades; so that this strong and beautiful creature was a wonder of which the inhabitants had never seen the like. His curly mane and tail were black as the raven's wing, and almost swept the ground. His coat shone in the light like the finest black satin. His limbs were sinewy, yet delicate and slender. His eye glowed like a burning coal, and his nostrils seemed to breathe forth a flame. They were never weary of looking on so wonderful a horse; but were struck with no less surprise to observe that he was shod with solid silver.

"The officers of the palace, roused by the murmur of the multitude in the court, who were discussing this extraordinary sight, looked forth from the windows, and were seized with equal admiration. In short, tidings of the horse and his rider soon reached the ears of the king, who, in his turn, was animated with the utmost curiosity to see what his courtiers and officers reported to him. So, dismissing all other business for that day, he commanded the stranger to lead the horse

into the inner court, where he surveyed him from a balcony.

“ Then the rider, begging the king’s leave to exhibit what his horse was capable of, made him perform some astonishing feats of gallopping, leaping, breaking shields and palisades with his hoofs, to show his strength and agility. Afterwards he commanded him to dance among a score of eggs, arranged in a pattern on the ground, without breaking them ; to pick up a small piece of money ; to carry his master’s turban in his teeth, and lay it before the king, going down at the same time on his knees, in token of homage.

“ The king, being delighted with the horse’s performances, demanded of his rider for what sum out of the royal treasury he would part with him ; bidding him not fear to name a worthy price. The horseman, to show the king that the price could not be moderate, told him he had not yet seen the greatest wonder he had to show. Then, mounting again, he rode the horse to a large reservoir of water in the midst of the court, and causing him to leap upon the surface of the water, spurred him round and round at different paces, while the water rang under his hoofs as if it were of hard *and solid* crystal.

t this moment, the crowd in the outer court
oom for a man who pushed his way, breath-
l covered with dust, and gasped out that he
iness of life and death with the king. In a
) Pasha ! this was the sentinel, arrived from
ard-house, who with incredible labour, and
at the loss of life, had made his way in so
time to the city. But when he pressed into
er court, and had nearly fallen for weariness,
more astonished than at the guard-house to
same stranger again exhibiting the wonders
orse in presence of the king.

ne narration which was given by the man
e guard-house increased the king's astonish-
such a degree, that nothing would satisfy
t he must become possessed of such a
: at any price ; and he would have given
the royal palaces, and the possession of any
and title of honour, to the rider.

eanwhile, the fame of these events had
abroad, and the chief nobles of the city,
air retinue, and as many of the inhabitants
l find room in the palace-court, had crowded
ess it. Besides, the windows were filled
e chief officers of the palace; the queen and
ses, with all their train ; the royal guards

and chamberlains ; and, in a word, all who had the good fortune to be on the spot.

“ When therefore, O illustrious Pasha, the black horse had finished these manœuvres, the king called the rider to him ; and causing him to dismount and draw near to the balcony, he thus addressed him :

“ ‘ Stranger,’ said the king, ‘ I know not whence you come, neither do I inquire ; but I remind you that your life is forfeited, at my pleasure, for having entered my kingdom without leave being first asked and obtained. Nevertheless, I pardon you this transgression, if you will yield to me this horse at such a price as ought to content you.’

“ ‘ O king,’ answered the horseman, ‘ it is enough for your servant if you forgive him the boldness of his entrance into your dominions. But, if this satisfy not your royal bounty, then the horse shall be yours, if you cause your treasurer to give me a *cappok* for the first nail in his silver shoes, two cappoks for the second, and so on, doubling the sum on every nail, of which he has eight in each of the four shoes.’

“ Your Excellency must know that a *cappok* was the smallest silver coin in the kingdom of *Agad-berek*, and was worth four asters. The aster

was a coin of such mean value that it was not of silver, but of copper. An aster was reckoned to be of the value of a small measure of pepper-corns.

"When the king therefore heard this answer from the owner of the horse, his face was inflamed with anger at the dishonour which he deemed was put upon him, by proposing such a mean sum for so noble an animal. Yet by the advice of his councillors he dissembled his indignation, and commanded a robe of purple silk, lined with costly foxes' skins, to be given to the stranger; and he caused him to be entertained in princely state in the quarters of the chief chamberlain. As for the black horse, at the stranger's request he was kept in a stable by himself, and regaled with coarse rye-bread, without a drop of water.

"The next day, the king assembled his court, having made proclamation through the country that all lords and officers who were absent should repair to the capital. When he was seated, with all his state, he commanded the stranger again to mount his horse in the courtyard, and cause him to tread on the water in the reservoir. Then were exhibited before him, to the admiration of the bystanders, manœuvres and feats of agility more surprising than the day before. When they were

concluded, the king again beckoned the stranger to his balcony, and asked him whether he had bethought him of some price worthy of a king to give for the horse that could do such feats.

“‘O king,’ answered the stranger, ‘I have indeed bethought me, that should I demand so enormous a price for the horse as I named yesterday, I deserve to be cut in small pieces for a cheat and a common horse-jockey. For one cappok doubled for every nail would be a price requiring the treasury of King Solomon himself, or that of the Sultan of all the Indies. Wherefore I beseech your majesty to take my horse, and give half a cappok or a double aster for the first nail, a cappok for the second, and so on, doubling for each nail in his four shoes.’

“On receiving this answer, O illustrious! the anger of the king against the owner of the horse knew no bounds; and he had great difficulty in restraining himself from ordering the chief of the guard at once to strike off his head, and to throw his body into the reservoir. He listened, however, to the counsels of his aged men, and checking his anger, he commanded the stranger to be clothed in a robe of scarlet velvet, lined with the choicest swan’s-down, and to be entertained for that day

with more than princely state in the quarters of the general of the armies. The black horse was treated, as before, to a little rye-bread, and not a drop of water.

“Not to weary your Excellency with all the honours and costly entertainment given to the unknown stranger, nor with the wonder which these events excited in the inhabitants of Agad-berek, on the third morning the king went to his balcony, summoned his court around him, and commanded the stranger again to mount his black horse, and to repeat the wonders of the two days before. At which time, to the acknowledgment of all beholders, the horse surpassed himself. For, beside all he had hitherto done, he now danced on the water of the reservoir with much grace, and kept exact time to a lively air sung by the horseman on his back in an unknown language, while the water rang to his silver hoofs like a musical instrument of crystal; so that everyone exclaimed they never had seen a dancer in all the court to come up to him. As to the king, he was so enchanted that he was ready to embrace the stranger when he dismounted, and cried out to him, ‘What price, O wonderful man, is not thy due, who dost give away to me a creature of such inestimable value?’ On

which the stranger, drawing near to the king, replied : ‘ Swear to me, O king, that you will give me indeed the price which I shall ask this time, and neither more nor less ; and further, call hither your notaries, and let them draw up a contract of sale : then sign it with your sign-manual, and seal it with your royal signet, and swear on it by the religion of your country, and by the tombs of your fathers, and by the beard of the late king your uncle, that it may be firm and unchangeable to me, and to those who come after me, as long as Agaberek shall be a kingdom.’

“ Though, it is true, the king was surprised at these strange words, yet so great was his eagerness to possess himself of the horse, that he stayed not to reflect ; but calling for the chief of his notaries, bade him attend and write out the conditions of sale. But first the stranger, prostrating himself before the king, besought him to give his royal promise, and confirm it on oath, that he would refrain from anger when they were stated to him. This the king also complied with, feeling some curiosity as to the proposal ; then the stranger prostrated himself again, and began his speech as he had done the day before :

“ ‘ I have bethought me, O king,’ said he, ‘ that

should I demand so enormous a price for the horse as I named yesterday, I deserve to be cut in small pieces for a cheat and a common horse-jockey. For half a cappok, doubled for every nail, would be a price requiring the treasury at least of the King of Egypt, or the great Emperor of the West, or of Prester John. Wherefore I beseech your majesty to take my horse, and give an aster for the first nail, a double aster for the second, and so throughout, doubling for each nail in his four hoofs.'

"Though the king was bound by his promise to refrain from anger, yet he could not hinder such a emotion of mind as kept him silent, looking steadfastly at the stranger. For he considered his royal bounty to be outraged by these three proposals, one after another, and each cheaper than the former, until this last began with the meanest coin in his realm. At length, however, he made a sign to his chief notary to approach, and bade him, with a troubled countenance, to write out the contract of sale.

"The stranger, O illustrious, perceiving the king's disturbance, proceeded thus: 'Know, O king, and be assured, it is not from any doubt of your royal bounty that I name this price, as you shall

presently be convinced. But, since it is your pleasure to give more than I would have, behold, the horse has eight small silver coins strung on his bridle: let these be reckoned after the nails, and the cappoks be still doubled on them in the reckoning, until the last of the eight coins on the bridle be counted.'

"When the contract was thus drawn out with all the forms observed in the kingdom of Agaberek, the king subscribed it with his sign-manual, and sealed it with his royal signet, and swore upon it the accustomed oath, that it might be faithfully observed. Then the king sent for the high treasurer of his kingdom, and bade him take with him a clerk to reckon up the number of cappoks in silver and gold money, and a porter to carry it in a bag to the quarters of the first minister of state. Thither he also sent Reis-Arad, for that was the stranger's name, to be lodged for that day. Reis Arad had no sooner arrived at the house, which was a palace in the city, second only to the king's, than there followed him from the king a dress of cloth-of-gold, lined with satin, mingled with silver and embroidered with pearls and rubies. The king also sent word that Reis-Arad should dine with him that day.

"But not long after, the high treasurer appeared before the king, with his garments rent, and ashes on his head ; throwing himself on the ground he bewailed the day whereon he was born, and the day when the king had made him treasurer. At length he composed himself enough to rise and speak thus :

"O king ! command the contract of sale to be torn, and let the treacherous horseman be cut into four pieces, and thrown into the reservoir ; and let his head be fixed on a pole before the palace-gate, as a warning to all who shall attempt to deceive my lord the king !"

"The king was astonished beyond measure at this speech of the high treasurer, and commanded him at once to explain himself.

"Know then, O king ! continued he, 'that this crafty stranger has deceived your majesty, and made you sign a bond that will exhaust your treasury, and impoverish your kingdom.'

"How dare you ?" interrupted the king, 'come before me with such improbable tales ? I see clearly it is nothing but jealousy of this stranger that makes you speak thus ; and I declare, by the lake of the five streams, that if you do not prove to me what you say, you shall im-

mediately lose your head.' With that he made a sign for the chief executioner to draw near with his scimitar.

"‘O king!’ answered the other, ‘I deserve to lose my head, if I do not make good what I now say. The sum which the stranger has demanded is so immense, that should your majesty command fifty of the strongest slaves to transport that treasure from the royal treasury, and cause them to toil day and night, many days must elapse before the treasury will be exhausted, and still the debt will not be paid. And should you command all the nobles and chief men in the kingdom to pour in their stores, even to the last cappok, still the debt would remain unpaid. And if you should lay heavy taxes on your subjects, and grind them down for the very bread and salt they eat, still the debt must remain unpaid. And if you should discover new mines in Agad-berek, to yield you abundant silver and gold, yet many years of labour must go by, and the royal mint must be kept at work night and day, and still the debt remain unpaid.* Therefore, O king, permit your

* A farthing of our money, doubled the number of times here mentioned, would amount to 572,702,852*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.*; a penny so doubled would produce 2,290,811,409*l.* 1*s.* 4*d.*

servant to bewail the day he was born, and the day on which you made him treasurer; but above all, the day on which this stranger came riding up the river, and caused you to sign the contract: unless, indeed, you tear the bond, and cut him in four pieces, and throw him into the reservoir:—for then our mourning would be turned into joy.'

"Now it chanced, that the palace of the chief of the army stood near the king's palace: and, as the chief treasurer made his lamentations with a loud voice, the stranger, who was at the window, could not but hear what he said. So he came down, and presented himself again before the king, and cast himself, together with the sealed contract, before his footstool. And he besought the king to let the contract be torn, and that he might still be allowed to keep his black horse: for he assured the king, that the horse would allow no one but himself to mount him. And this was proved, when, by the king's commandment, the horse was brought out again, and the chief groom of the royal stables attempted to ride him: for the horse shook him off with violence, so that he fell into the reservoir, and was all but drowned.

"The king at length assented, and the contract was destroyed, to the great joy of all the

court. Only, the king was not content without bestowing on Reis-Arad a princely revenue, and a palace equal to that of the general in chief, with a title to match. It was moreover concluded that the new prince should forthwith marry the king's eldest daughter, whose name was Silver Moon-shine. The king was now urgent with Reis-Arad to relate to him the history of the black horse, and how he became possessed of him; but Reis-Arad excused himself under some pretext, and succeeded in putting off the question.

"So the marriage of Reis-Arad and Silver Moon-shine was celebrated with great rejoicings, which lasted nine days. Every day during the festival the new governor rode through city and suburb attended by slaves who led ten sumpter mules laden with money, which they scattered among the people, and loaves of white bread. All praised the viceroy's liberality, and extolled the wisdom of the king in having given to such a man a share of his authority. And the chief poet made sonnets, which the people sang before him as he rode. They ran thus:

'A stranger of no common wisdom came to us by the light
the moon :

But is he not cousin to the sun at noon-day?

The gentle moonlight beams on him with mildness;
May its light never wane in Agad-berek !'

"Afterwards, the government was chiefly entrusted to Reis-Arad, and he was established as the second man in the kingdom. At the council, and in the seat of judgment, he showed much prudence and equity; and all men were content. Many improvements were made in the customs of the country, which would be too long to detail.

"But every year, at the new moon of the twentieth month, Reis-Arad caused his wonderful black horse to be saddled: and, bidding farewell to the king his father-in-law, to the princess Silver Moonshine his wife, and her two children, mounted and rode away. The people every year crowded on the banks of the river, in sorrow to see him depart, fearing lest they might never see him again. The horse lost none of his fire and activity as time rolled on; and the waters rang under his silver hoofs like solid crystal, as Reis-Arad rode down on the surface of the river towards the cleft. All the inhabitants of the country along the banks would come forth to greet him, and watch him until he disappeared between the smooth rocks of red marble. Some who climbed the mountains and looked out on the plains of Æthiopia reported

that they had watched Reis-Arad riding on the river all down its course, till he became a speck in the distance, and then vanished away.

“ This he did year by year. When, after seven days, he returned the same way he had gone, he spoke no word of his journey, for what purpose he had absented himself, nor what, nor whom, he had seen. He resumed his government, and all things went on as before, until the return of that new moon in the next year. Nor could the princess his wife, nor his closest friends, ever obtain from him any information about the wonderful horse, who was always fed on coarse rye-bread, without a drop of water.

“ Now, on one of the highest points of the mountains around Agad-berek, lived an old hermit, or recluse. He had retired from the royal city some years before, and had scooped for himself a small cell in the rock. There he lived in prayer and contemplation, taking no food but berries and grass that grew near his cell. The water of a fountain that ran down to one of the five rivers was his drink. He tasted it once a day at even-tide, making a cup of his two hands; and drank one spare draught. This hermit had been an officer in the king’s armies, much valued for his

warlike qualities and wisdom. One day, while he reviewed the troops, he heard a voice bidding him retire from all but the Great Spirit and himself, and spend his days in prayer. But the more he retired the more he was followed by the people, who came to him for advice and healing. So he scooped for himself cell after cell, each higher on the mountain than the preceding ; but still he was disturbed by the multitudes who crowded round him. At last he scooped his cell on such a peak, and so hard of access, that few could climb to it. Everyone who came there had to swing himself up smooth and slippery crags, and round points of rock that hung over deep clefts and precipices, holding only by roots that grew in the crevices, which often came away in the climber's hand. Thus multitudes of persons had perished in the adventure; to the great grief of the hermit, who looked down from his cave upon their whitened bones strewing the valley beneath. Yet he could not leave the solitude to which the Voice had called him, to save the lives of those who came to seek him there.

“ Reis-Arad was among the most frequent visitors to the hermit's cell. What passed between them at their long interviews none could guess ;

though all men wondered to see this prince leave the pleasures as well as the cares of his worldly state, and trust a life so prosperous and so valuable to the uncertain footing of the precipice that led him to the aged man.

“All this while I have forgotten, O Pasha! to mention that the people of Agad-berek were a vicious and selfish race; plunged in the mere pleasures of the moment, forgetful of many of the obligations which man, by the law of natural reason, owes to his neighbour. The mild climate and fertile soil they enjoyed only increased the indolence and self-indulgence of their lives. While they professed a worship purer than the idolatry of the *Æthiopians* around them, they spent their time in the neglect of the precepts of any religion.

“The wickedness of the place seemed to increase every year that rolled by; and it was remarked that when anyone in Agad-berek died, after having attained to man’s estate, his face immediately became black and hideous, and a burning spot like a live coal came upon his forehead. They who had climbed to the hermit’s cell, however, formed an exception to this: for when they came to die, their countenances wore a calm and peaceful look, and they expressed themselves as

thankful for having listened to all the aged man had said to them.

"Another wonderful thing was, that the bodies of those who fell down the precipices and died on their way to his cell, remained unmolested where they lay. Neither the raven of the mountains nor the foxes of the valley touched them; but the little birds would cover them with leaves, and numerous colonies of white ants, silently and cleanly separating the flesh from the bones, left their skeletons as white as driven snow. Whereas, on the other hand, a jester of the king's, who one day followed some of these pilgrims to the foot of the precipice to mock their devout desire to hear the hermit's teaching, was killed by a stone detached from the rocks by the foot of some climber above him, and his body was devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey, who were heard to growl and scream all night over the mangled limbs. Hence, O Pasha! the men of Agad-berek might have perceived, had they been willing to learn, how great a difference there is in death between those whose lives have been diversely spent."

"The Pasha," continued the Improvisatore, "had listened with interest to the narrative of the Tunis merchant, so far as it treated of the

wonderful doings of the black horse of Reis-Arad. But when it turned upon the punishment of wickedness, and the reward of those who do well, a shade came over his countenance, and he manifested no slight displeasure. Several times he stroked his beard, and looked at the merchant with louring eyes. The merchant, on his part, felt no disposition to turn preacher at the hazard of his life, which was in the Pasha's hands; accordingly, when he received a sign to continue, he tried to tone down his story a little, to suit the occasion.

"There existed," said he, "O Pasha! an ancient prophecy, which scarce any one regarded, and which had almost perished out of remembrance. It said that if the king, his court, and the whole country went on in their evil ways, the water which rendered their valley fertile and their lives prosperous, would be turned into an instrument of vengeance against them. The instructions of the hermit on the mountain were supposed to contain a memento and warning of this prophecy to the inhabitants of Agad-berek; and it was certain that some few among those who climbed to his cell reformed their lives in accordance with it. For the people of the kingdom in general, they went on *as if they had never heard of it:* some openly

mocked ; others were content to pass it by in silence, and forget it."

"The Pasha of Egypt," continued the Italian, "here showed unmistakeable signs of impatience and discontent at the narrative ; so that the renegade, in a whisper to the Tunis merchant, besought him to cut this part of the story short, and relate something more entertaining. He had unpleasant remembrances of what the Pasha had said about the bow-string.

" Stimulated thus, the merchant proceeded :

" One evening, O Pasha ! when Reis-Arad had just returned from the perilous adventure of climbing to the hermit's cell, he ordered his black horse to be saddled and bridled, and led into that court of the palace in which was the reservoir, or fountain. His officers and attendants perceived his countenance to be troubled ; but he spoke no other word, except to desire that the Princess Silver Moonshine and her children should be sent for from the women's apartments. All wondered at these orders ; because the time of Reis-Arad's yearly departure had not yet drawn nigh. He was obeyed in silence ; and the princess came forth, trembling, pale as the moonlight from which she was named, and leading her two children by the

hand. Then Reis-Arad placed them all with great care on the black charger, which stood motionless as a statue by the fountain. But his eyes glowed like coals of fire in the deep shadow of the court; which was surrounded on all sides by the lofty palace buildings, partly lit by the torches from a distant banqueting-hall, where the king and all his officers and great men were carousing with goblets of the choicest wines in Agad-berek.

"There was silence in the court-yard; and all men's hearts beat in suspense for what might be in store. The black horse began to snort with the longing impatience of the camel in the desert when first the scent of the distant fountain reaches him. And when the moon rose over the mountains that shut-in the land, it was seen by its light that the waters in the reservoir were troubled, and began to heave and overflow. This prodigy, which had never been seen before, nor written in the chronicles of Agad-berek, smote all the bystanders with fear, so that each man fled his several way. Nothing was heard through the palace but cries of terror. The music and sounds of revelry ceased in the banqueting-hall; for a messenger had rushed in to tell the king that his palace-yard was flooded with the *rising* waters.

"Meanwhile, the violence of the fountain increased, and the angry waves dashed up to the windows. Faster and faster rose the flood, till it became like the whirlpools in the northern seas. It filled the court, it rose to the palace roof that surrounded it, it poured over the roof in a rushing cataract, and began to overwhelm the city on every side. Many of the inhabitants were drowned in the first gush of the waters : all who were able fled to the upper rooms, or crowded on the flat roofs of their houses. The king had already been overwhelmed at his banquet, and his lords and officers round him, who had all drunk to excess. The water reached them in their chairs of state and luxury, where each one sate, unable to rise. Their swollen corpses were soon floating to and fro through the banqueting-hall, the late scene of their revels, and some of them even floated out at the windows.

"All this while, the noble black charger, bearing Reis-Arad, Silver Moonshine, and her children, had paced round and round on the surface of the flood as it rose, and his hoofs rang upon the water as if it were solid crystal. Higher and higher they mounted with the water, till it was level with the *palace-roof*. As the palace was the highest

building in the city, overlooking all the rest, it came to pass that by this time all the inhabitants had been swept off their roofs, and drowned in the deluge of waters; for the flood still came pouring from the palace on every side, as if the palace-court itself were one great reservoir that had overflowed its brim.

“When the horse and his burden had risen thus high, the whole country lay around them in the silent moonlight, looking like the basin of a lake filling gradually. Not a sign of life was to be seen; but many corpses of soldiers, state-officers, and inhabitants of the commoner sort, floated and rolled where once were the streets of the submerged city. The princess wept bitterly, and bewailed the fate of all her kindred. As to the children, they were overcome by fear, and thought chiefly of maintaining their seat on horseback: though the fiery black charger moved under them as gently as a lamb.

“As Reis-Arad looked toward the mountain, he saw a fire which the hermit had made near his cell; perhaps in warning to those whom he had warned before, that the hour of destruction was come. By its light, the form of the hermit was clearly seen, gazing down upon the mighty fountain,

whose billows now extended through the country far and wide. It was also plain that he saw Reis-Arad, for he raised his arm aloft, in blessing or farewell. Then the horseman turned his bridle, and rode down on the slope of the cataract, over what was once the city of Agad-berek, towards the left through which he had at first entered the kingdom."

"And was seen no more?" inquired the Pasha, with something like interest.

"Excellency," returned the Tunis merchant, except the hermit himself, there was none left to see him. But I never heard that Reis-Arad returned to the place; which became thenceforward, and is now, a mountainous lake, its craggy margin inhabited by the few poor fishermen who toil up to it for a scanty subsistence from the surrounding plains of *Æthiopia*. For, strange to say, the cleft in the mountain wall which I mentioned in the beginning closed up completely that night; probably by the same convulsion of nature which opened the fountain."

"Not," suddenly interrupted the dervish, to the Pasha's extreme astonishment, "not that the last remark is to prejudice the supernatural character or the moral lesson of the narrative; for secondary

causes are wielded as scourges, and made instruments of blessing, though the decree for either goes forth from on high."

"The Pasha mused within himself, whether he should honour the dervish's commentary with approval, or with the bow-string. After stroking his beard twice or thrice, he determined to compromise the matter by passing it in silence. He also signified to the Tunis merchant, by a nod, that he had saved his life by the tale he had narrated, and that he might stand apart.

"On this the renegade came forward—"

"Hallo!" cried the Nabob, who was a kind of Pasha in his way, and somehow, from his quality of peremptoriness, had assumed the position of master of the revels;—"place aux dames, if you please, Signior. Here stands Lady Enshawe's name next on the list. A story is a story, all the world over; and then the narrator retires, with—

'Gentles, my tale is said.' "

This was agreed to unanimously. The Improvisatore was too polite, and also too politic, to let his dissatisfaction appear; he only claimed that, when the lady's narrative was ended, he might have leave to continue his broken rhapsody.

"Shall I read that translation of the little Italian

that was packed in the boxes forwarded to
n Florence?" said Lady Enshawe to her
d.

"Oh, do!" said Miss Dunbar, "I liked the turn
much when I heard it before."

"By all means," answered Sir Robert, offering
ptain a cigar.

The Nabob made a sign to his black attendant
enish his hookah.

dy Enshawe began :

The Lady's Tale.

THE GARDEN.

"A CHEERFUL party of us visited the convent of Vallombrosa, so celebrated for the beauty of its surrounding scenery, especially for the thick and leafy chestnut-woods alluded to by Milton. We were received with all hospitality in the outer lodge, the only part of the monastic buildings accessible to ladies: and were entertained by one of the community, deputed for the purpose. He was a kind and genial old man, who seemed amused, in a sort of staid way, at the high spirits and evident enjoyment of his guests. At last, when we had exhausted our curiosity by asking him many questions, pertinent as they seemed to us—and I hope he found no reason to consider them otherwise—we begged him to tell us some story relating to the monastic life.

"He must surely, we said, have met with some strange incident, or remarkable trait of character,

in the course of his experience ; for we had made out that he had seen a good deal of the world, and been subject to much change of place, before and since his religious profession. To humour us, he went into several details of his former life as a *avvocato*, and afterwards as a monk ; none of which quite satisfied our thirst for what was novel and strange. At length, yielding to our importunity, he rose and went to a quaint old cabinet (of course made of chestnut) that stood in a corner of the guest-room, from which he produced a little unscript poem, bearing some marks of age. Holding this in his hand, he addressed us to the following effect :

“ ‘ I made my noviceship,’ said the old man, ‘ in a convent of our Order in Calabria, among the ‘ broken mountains,’ well-named, of the Abruzzi. It was an out-of-the-way spot, favourable to the retirement for which I sought it; and I look back with feelings of much affection to the little convent building, perched on the side of a craggy hill, and to my religious companionship with the brotherly souls that dwelt there.

“ ‘ You, my honoured guests, pass your lives varied intercourse with society. Your friends come and go in a shifting *phantasmagoria* of forms

and characters that leave, perhaps, no very deep or lasting stamp on the remembrance. Hence you can hardly estimate the close bond of mutual charity which unites those who pass long years together with common hopes and aims, under a common rule that makes their lives seem each a repetition of the other. We chanted the divine praises side by side, day and night, in the choir; we remained there by the hour in silent contemplation, side by side. We laboured together in silence at the daily manual toil, refreshed the bodily strength by the daily meal taken in a common refectory, and the soul by a spiritual reading adapted to our common life ; and we looked forward to the repose that was soon to unite us in the little cloistral cemetery, one grave of which was kept open,* ready for the next comer.

“ ‘ Ah, you who think that a life so dedicated to God as that of monk or nun must needs be loveless and joyless, little know how the supernatural charity of those who strive to mortify

* “ Est à noter qu'il y a toujours audict cimetière une fosse faicte pour le premier religieulx qui mourra, et une autre fosse à demy faicte, qui se parfera apres que l'autre sera couverte et s'en recommencera une à demy.” “ Clervaulx” at the beginning of the xvith century. Didron's *Annales Archéologiques*, tom. iii.

every impulse, and bury every thought of earth, transcends the best of the lower affections whereby others would answer their souls' cravings for loving and being beloved !

“‘Enough of this,’ the old man continued, checking a flow of memory which had brought colour to his cheek and light to his eye, ‘and pardon me if I have said aught that went beyond the occasion. Let me now explain why I produce this writing.

“‘On my entrance into the noviceship, I was welcomed by a little band of some seven or eight aspirants to the solemn vows of the Order. It formed part of the rule under which we passed our time of probation, that no one should speak without permission of his own life in the world, or of any person or event appertaining to life beyond the cloister. You will see the good sense of this when you remember that we were all there for one definite purpose : to be transformed during our novitiate into new men, to forget the past, or remember it only to bewail and repent of whatever faults it contained. One day, however, a brother of the Order came to repose for a while on his journey towards Rome from a distant convent. As he bore a high character for sanctity

and learning, the Community hailed his visit with joy, and we novices were permitted during the time of recreation to walk with this good priest in the convent garden.

“ Many things he told us of his experiences during the labours of a long apostolic life. But what struck me most was a little ballad, or brief narrative in verse, which he repeated to us during one of those walks. I afterwards transcribed it from memory, and will now read it to you. He had found it, he said, among the archives of a convent in Sicily in which he once held office. Tradition assigned it to a monk deceased during the period when the island was still harassed from time to time by the descent of marauding Saracens ; and this may serve to account for the allusion contained in it to the Moors. The author of these verses is said to have been “ the Prior ” himself, whose treatment of the poor monk was apparently so harsh, as you are going to hear; he may have left this little monastic incident on record, both to preserve the memory of a virtue under trial, and to take his own share in the humiliations which he deemed it his duty to administer. The legend, or narrative, if you are pleased so to dignify it, is said to refer to one

ver whose grave in that small cloister near
Girgenti is a mouldering cross of wood, with the
name, scarcely now to be deciphered,

Fra Mortificato.'

"I hardly know," continued Lady Enshawe, whether you will accept an indifferent translation which I made of the old man's manuscript. I can only offer it as an attempt to render the great simplicity of the original into very unpretending English; but here it is, at your service."

So saying, she produced and began to read :

THE GARDEN.

"Father, I seek your convent walls,
A traveller from the court of Spain :
Some ghostly maxim I would learn,
And bear it to the world again.

How blest, methinks, your life ! to yield
All self a holocaust to heaven :
Ah, blest with more than kings' estate
To whom such joyous call is given !

What high serenity of soul
Surrounds him, as toward his crown
He gradual mounts, and passion-freed
Calm on the lessening world looks down.

From the dead past what beauty springs ;
What garden 'mid the desert made,
With blooming thorns, with passion-flowers?" — —
The fluent courtier spoke : then stayed.

They pac'd the silent cloister through ;
The Prior opes one lowly door :
A stalwart monk within his cell
Kneels down submissive on the floor.

"Stranger !" exclaims the father stern,
"Mark ye the man ? oh, sight of shame !
Who could have deem'd, a coward's heart
Throbs in the pulses of yon frame ?

Was it not shame, from manly fight
To flee, to cower in cloister'd shade,
And cling to a dishonour'd life
While kinsmen felt the biting blade ?"

The tremulous lip, the changeful brow
Show'd what emotion shook the frere :
No word spoke he ; they turn'd, then pac'd
Forth, while he kneel'd in silence there :

Forth on a water'd ground, where herbs
By monkish hands were weeded clean :
Still on those words the stranger mus'd,
Then cried abrupt, with 'wilder'd mien,

"Spare him, good father, taunt severe !
He comes, belike, of servile race ;
Well may those brows in prayer be lit,
That glory's wreath could never grace."

With patient smile the Prior then ;
"Fair stranger, learn ere thus ye speak :
No knightlier blood proud Spain can boast
Than burns within that brother's cheek.

More honour'd name in camp or hall,
More dreadful to the foe, was none ;
Your cavaliers would welcome death
Renown so peerless to have won.

Where deadliest rag'd the stubborn fight
His falchion drank of bravest gore ;
Alone, through serried ranks, he burst
To win the banner from the Moor.

Now in more arduous, inner strife
For heav'n's high guerdon see him close ;
By prayer and fast, and will subdued,
The prize to wrest from ghostly foes.

The knight, forgotten in the frere,
Two years this narrow path has trod ;
Still aims at heav'n with readier skill,
And dies to self, and lives to God.

One idol yet, though tottering, keeps
Its ancient place—his knightly fame !
That old self writhes with sudden wound,
If taunt of fear assail his name.

Hence at uncertain times, as now,
Held forth he is to blame untrue ;
Till that last, lingering frailty yield,
And grace triumphant all renew.

Till, following One whom 'a lost world
Join'd to dishonour and deride,
The robe of scorn he love to wear,
By its hid virtue purified.

You praise our garden skill ? 'Tis here :
Ah, when God's life is graff'd on ours,
Then flush, my son, the fragrant thorns,
Then bloom the choicest passion-flowers !

Go now in peace, thy lesson learn'd,
While that dear frere the merit gains :
No offering pure he makes to God
Who vows his all, yet part retains."

: reading of this manuscript produced various impressions on the audience. There was, of a due amount of compliment and acknowledgment to the authoress; but when from this it turned to discuss the subject of the ballad, a strong impression prevailed that the poor monk had hardly dealt with. The Captain, in particular, expressed himself strongly on the point. He said that the courage of every man of known character should be quietly assumed, as a thing of course; seldom spoken about, never doubted, nor denied. A commanding officer, he said, would not unwarrantably, and bring himself under the censure of honour, who should say to any subordinate, that he deserved only a tenth part of what the Prior said to his superior; and he thought the novice had a full right to knock him out, or knock him down. Moreover, it was flat lying, and most ungentlemanly conduct. Most of the others agreed in this, though they did not express themselves so strongly. Lady Jane, who liked the story, and was not, perhaps, disposed to regard her translation with entire indifference, took the other side, more as a matter of sympathy than of reasoning. At last, the Student distinctly appealed to her for his opinion. When she was challenged, the Student began quietly to

say, that a great distinction was to be made between natural and supernatural motives ; and that the second might carry on a man, both to do and to endure many things, where the first stopped short and could not help him over the stile. To the second class, he said, belonged the voluntary obedience and submission under which a novice, then a monk, placed himself towards his superiors. Such a man made a willing surrender of the liberty and liberty which he might lawfully have retained. For the sake of greater perfection, and with a view to a higher reward in the next world, he gave up what no law he had before been under required him to renounce. Henceforward he was bound by his own act and deed, and had to accept the mortifications put on him for his greater good. They who laid these mortifications on him, did it in a loving spirit, whatever the outward seeming might be. Or if not, if they allowed imperfection of temper, or even sinful dislike to sway them, all the more merit for those who still obeyed. They reminded them of the words of the Apostle, "Your own Bibles, ladies and gentlemen," added with a smile, "as well as in mine:

"Servants, be subject to your masters with fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also

the foward. For this is thankworthy, if, for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, sinning and being buffeted, you suffer it? But if, doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God. For unto this *you have been called.*'

"Now," continued he, "the early Christians, to whom the Apostle wrote, were *called* to endure persecutions from the temporal power; and those of them who had been born in a condition of slavery were called to submit to the tyrannical will of their masters, wherever they could do so without sin. So too, the willing subject, the man who has surrendered his liberty here, that he may hereafter enjoy 'the liberty of the glory of God's children,' is *called* to an unquestioning obedience, as part of his religious vocation. He has vowed submission and obedience 'not only to the good and gentle, but also to the foward.'"

The Student seemed to think he had now satisfied the demand for his opinion; and as no one was disposed to pursue it, and the majority of his hearers remained unconvinced, so (as the newspapers say of a parliamentary debate) "the subject here dropped."

The Improvisatore needed no second hint it was now his turn to resume the tales that told before the Pasha of Egypt.

“The Renegade,” he resumed, “to whom it had fallen to narrate a tale of *Earth*, stepped forward and made his obeisance to the Pasha, then at once commenced the legend of

The Renegade's Tale—Earth.

RUFINUS, THE TREASURE-SEEKER.

"It was some years after the Emperor Constantine had turned from the worship of idols. Many of his chief officers followed the imperial example, together with a multitude of the common people. But there remained still in Rome a considerable number who practised their old heathenism ; some in secret, others more openly. These nourished a great hatred against the Christians ; the more, because their children, on growing up, often deserted the belief of their elders for the new religion. It was common for such parents to disinherit their offspring, and bestow the property on distant relatives ; often, however, they buried and hid it away. This was done in the hope that the old system would be set up again some day, and hence be burnt once more in the Capitol to the statue of Jupiter.

"It was supposed by some, who professed to

have means of knowing, that these buried treasures were guarded by spells and enchantment, and could only be discovered by the invocation of demons. Once or twice, urns filled with coins and other valuables had been dug up among the old ruined houses and temples near the Roman Forum. In such instances, there were certain marks by which the treasure might have been found; obscure, and hard to interpret, before the event, but seeming so plain after it, that the finders marvelled at not having at once divined their meaning. The art of treasure-seeking, therefore, began to be much studied by some in Rome. Indolent persons, who would not be at pains to cultivate a garden with honest industry, would grub up nearly an equal space of waste ground, in the vain hope of discovering something to make them suddenly rich.

“ Among such disappointed idlers was an artisan named Rufinus ; who, before this fit, or gold-fever, came upon him, had, by constant labour, maintained his wife and children in some comfort. One evening, his day’s work being over, as he was digging some roots in his garden, he chanced to pull up, together with a root, a handful of copper coins of the reign of Caligula. These sufficed him to live in leisure for a week, and to enjoy some

little diversion. But such a taste of idleness threatened to be his ruin. ‘What,’ said he to himself, ‘if, instead of a few copper Caligulas, I were to light on a treasure of one of the old patrician families?’ In a word, the industrious nail-maker became transformed into a listless dreamy pauper, who sauntered about with folded hands and gazed vacantly on the old palace walls and frowning ruins, as if he would ask them to reveal the secrets they contained.

“As he thus moped one day by some ruins bordering the Campus Martius, where the Roman legions had been wont to exercise, he remarked a lower that grew on a piece of broken and tottering wall. Reaching forth his hand to pluck it, he pulled away with it a clod of earth, when he observed a rude inscription cut into the stone he had laid bare. It was some time before he made out the Latin verses, which ran as follows :

Thou who shalt see this wall in ruin laid,
Measure nine steps of ground,
Call Mercury to aid,
Then search, take, freely use whate'er is found.

“On reading these lines Rufinus mused for some time. Being a Christian, he could not call on Mercury: and should he even venture to invoke

whatever demon might answer to the summons, the wall was not yet thrown down, as the verses intimated it must be, or the treasure would not be found. He tried to pace nine steps in a line outward from the wall ; but the ground was so encumbered with ruin, and overgrown with brambles, that he could hardly guess at the right measure, and this led him to no result. A hope, however, now possessed him that he had gained a clue to some good fortune ; and he trembled with eagerness to secure it. His first care was to remove all marks of the spot, lest some one might step in before him. He carefully replaced the earth over the inscription, and after examining the ground on every side again and again, returned at nightfall to his wretched home. There he found his starving wife and children, who clamoured round him for bread. Things now went on from bad to worse for some time. Rufinus altogether neglected his craft, and spent whole days loitering and dreaming round the ruins ; wealthy in imagination, and poor in fact. His family lived partly on the pot-herbs which grew in his small garden, partly on the charity of neighbours, who, not being treasure-seekers, found a comfortable subsistence from *honest toil*.

"Three months after he had discovered the inscription, Rufinus one day seated himself on a broken pillar, near his favourite ruins. He was musing on the riches that lay buried near him; when a sudden storm came on. The heavens grew black; while a growl of thunder brought such a deluge of rain, that he ran for shelter under the broken wall. The thunder grew louder at every moment; after some distant claps came a burst from the heavens, with a flash of lightning that struck the ruined wall, causing several portions of it to fall, and the remaining part to totter. The crash of the falling stones made Rufinus leap from under them, and he narrowly escaped being buried. Scarcely had he fled to a safe distance, when the whole came down with a wide sweep, as if it had been pushed outwards by the hand of a giant. Then, by the light of the flashes, which came thick and constant, Rufinus saw that a square niche had been laid bare, and in the midst of it was a bronze statue. The four walls had fallen away and parted from this on every side, so that the statue was clearly seen by the lightning which flashed without ceasing. It was a crowned statue, holding the scales of justice in one hand, and a sword in the other.

"At this moment, the verses of the inscription, which always ran in the memory of Rufinus, dawned upon him with a new intelligence. The wall was laid in ruins; but still, from what point was he to measure the nine steps? He could not guess this part of the enigma, yet he seemed nearer to his hopes than before, and his heart bounded within him for joy. When the storm had somewhat abated, he ran towards the statue, and surveyed it on every side. Some token, he felt sure, was connected with it, if only he could decipher the secret. The sword in the left hand rested against the shoulder of the bronze figure; but the right hand held the scales extended; and on the brow was written, in ancient characters:

Strike here!

"Now at last,' cried Rufinus aloud, intoxicated with joy, 'I am to be rewarded for my patience!' He doubted not that the statue would prove to be hollow, and filled with coin or jewels. 'The head, at least,' he thought, 'must contain them; one strong blow, well aimed where those letters are written on the brow, and I am in possession of enough to live upon in wealth for the rest of my life!' As he thus gave vent to his hopes and joy, he turned aside,

and was startled to see a stranger standing at his elbow. It was an old man, leaning on a long staff. An Eastern head-dress partly hid his features ; but his eye was fixed on Rufinus, and seemed to burn into him like a living coal. The nail-maker felt both anger and fear as he looked on this newcomer. He saw himself in danger of being robbed of his valuable secret ; and in his vexation he could willingly have given the stranger some rough usage to drive him from the spot. But the eye that he encountered when he looked on him, over-awed his spirit, and kept him silent.

“The stranger then spoke; and said, with a ironic smile, as terrible as the fire in his eye : Rufinus, are you afraid lest I should discover your thoughts ? Behold me in possession of them. What think you of such fine poetry as this :

Measure nine steps of ground,
Call Mercury to aid ?

Why dost thou linger ?” he continued ; ‘why not measure the ground, why not call on friend Mercury to enrich thee ?’

“Rufinus felt his fear of the stranger increase ; but he was a desperate man. He had brought himself and his family to ruin, and saw nothing but

starvation before him. He knew the sin of invoking the demons of old pagan Rome. But he was in that state of mind in which a man will leap down a yawning gulf rather than miss the object of his pursuit. With a faltering voice, as one who wavers while he approaches the precipice of a known sin, he whispered with parched lips rather than spoke the words : ‘O Mercury, help !’ ‘Aye, why should he not?’ observed the stranger, with a grim smile: ‘he is said to help those who live by their wits; perchance he may help you to read the inscription in a way you have not guessed.’ He pointed with his staff to the ground. Rufinus followed the direction, and saw the shadow of the staff (for the sun now shone out again after the storm) meet the shadow of the scales held in the hand of the statue. The sun was getting low, the shadows had lengthened, until that of the scales was thrown to a distance fully nine paces from the image. ‘How say you?’ asked the voice at his side ;

‘Strike here,
Then search, take, freely use whate’er is found.’

“ But as Rufinus turned to inquire further, the stranger had vanished. Whether he had glided behind the nearer masses of ruin, or dissolved int

air, Rufinus never knew. At the moment, he was so intent on this new meaning of the two inscriptions combined, that he thought of nothing else. He doubted not that he had indeed discovered the fated spot; he stood absorbed in his dream of riches. He now heard voices approaching. Conscience-smitten at the act of idolatry by which he had gained this knowledge, he withdrew within the shadow of the ruins.

“ Two Christians passed near the spot; an elderly man and a youth.

“ ‘ Enters Libra?’ asked the latter of his companion; ‘ but what has the sun entering Libra to do with this dreadful storm that has wetted us to the skin?’

“ ‘ It is the equinox,’ answered the other; ‘ and the elements are moved more than is common.’

“ ‘ Some witch raised it, I suppose,’ rejoined the youth, laughing; ‘ to spite us on our homeward journey.’

“ ‘ Hush, child!’ said the elder; ‘ let us never speak of such things without detesting them.’

“ ‘ Can anyone really, then, raise storms, and ride in the air, and do all we read and hear of, in that way?’

“ ‘ Doubtless,’ answered his companion; ‘ the

powers of evil are always ready to lend themselves to such as invoke them, and to lure deluded victims to their ruin ; but you know how grievous a crime it would be to—'

"The voices were now lost in the distance. But the warning was also lost on Rufinus. He was possessed by a master-passion, which would have rendered him deaf to a trumpet from the very heavens.

"‘Enters *Libra?*’ cried he, aloud. ‘Aye, the sun enters Libra to-day, indeed, and I will follow his example. It is not Mercury, or not Mercury alone. A chance voice tells me the same tale.’ So saying, he snatched up some small stones, and kneeling down, as if he would adore the wealth he believed to lie hid below, he placed them so as to be known again, on the spot over which he had seen the shadow fall.

"Why need I relate with what agitation Rufinus stole home to his wretched hovel? It was not to rest, nor to take food, but only to seek his garden-implements to break the ground. He waited till night should secure him from the intrusion of anyone wandering near the spot. During those hours of waiting, fancies came to haunt him; not of repentance, but of abject fear lest he should still

lose the treasure that seemed within his grasp. Someone, he thought, might be watching him unseen, might have overheard his exclamations, or what passed with the mysterious old man. The old man himself might take the caprice of disclosing the secret to another. Rufinus could hardly doubt it was a demon who had spoken to him : what if the demon should play him false, and attempt to secure two victims in place of one ? So he pondered and feared, until he could endure it no longer ; and though prudence whispered 'wait awhile,' he caught up his tools and rushed towards the ruins.

"A fitful moon was struggling among clouds that drove across it ; but by a stray gleam, Rufinus easily discovered the spot he had marked. Again, his tongue trembling with eagerness as much as with a sense of guilt, he pronounced the name of Mercury, and began his work. After some cautious strokes, pausing to listen lest any footstep might draw near, he thought the earth sounded hollow under his mattock. He redoubled his exertions ; and soon the tool rang upon a plate of metal. Clearing away the earth with frantic joy, he felt with his hands a ponderous ring fixed in the plate, which in turn was riveted into a square block of

marble. A third time he called Mercury to aid, and exerting all his strength, found he could now heave the block aside. A dark chasm yawned beneath ; as Rufinus stooped to look into it, his foot slipped through the mass of loose earth, which fell with him down the aperture, and the marble slab, whether by magic or its own weight, moved again into its place, and closed the mouth of the pit as before.

"Stunned by the fall, Rufinus lay for some time without sense or motion. At length he recovered, and finding some serious bruises were the only harm he had received, he arose, and began to feel his way in the dark through a narrow passage. At first he imagined himself to have fallen into the mouth of one of those subterranean catacombs which had been hewn underground by the Christians in times of persecution to bury their dead ; and he was seized with a dreadful thought that now he was doomed to end his career and be starved to death among the tombs. This thought chilled him with fear ; his knees trembled under him as he groped his way forward. He found himself abandoned on every side ; he dared not call on the holy Name of God, whom he had abjured by his act of *idolatry* ; and he knew it was useless again to

invoke the mocking demon who had led him into this snare. Heaven, earth, and hell seemed alike to have left him to die in this hideous pit.

"As he moved forward with great caution, he saw before him a faint glimmer of light. Animated with new hope, he made towards it; and found it proceed from a massive door, through whose chinks and hinges the brightness reached him. He pushed with all his strength against this door; but finding it resist his utmost efforts, he called once more on Mercury. He thought his voice was answered by the old man's frightful laugh: at the same moment the door yielded to the pressure of his hands, and swung inwards.

"Such a flood of dazzling light now burst on the eyes of Rufinus, that he had nearly fallen to the earth; but recovering himself, and gazing around, he saw a wonderful sight indeed; for in place of the low and dark passage through which he had crept, he found himself in a spacious hall, or vault, of which the walls, the pillars, and arched roof, were of solid gold. The hall was lighted, as light as a summer day, by massive golden lamps that hung from the roof, filled with an odorous oil, that shed a delightful fragrance around. Ranged round the hall were six-and-thirty golden vases,

each half a man's height, filled to the brim with gold and silver coins, intermixed with carved gems and precious stones uncut from the mine. Underneath each of the twelve golden lamps was the statue of a giant in the same precious metal, with a threatening aspect, who bore a club in his clenched hand. But the most precious thing in this hall of wonders was a golden tree or myrtle-shrub, that rose from the pavement in the midst, bearing berries of the brightest silver, and leaves of sparkling emeralds.

“Rufinus stood on the threshold of the hall, transfixed and stupefied. His eyes ranged up and down among the objects of untold wealth that lay before him ; his brain reeled under the sudden revolution of fortune that seemed to have placed them all within his grasp. At length, fixing his eyes on the emerald myrtle-shrub in the midst, he determined that a branch of it should be his first prize. He made a stride forward to seize it. But in the same moment, the twelve giants in the hall raised their clubs in the air towards the lamps ; and Rufinus paused. His heart beat violently ; what would come next ? The sparkle of the emeralds attracted him again ; he was resolved to possess them at any risk. Another stride forward ;

and the giants of gold swung their clubs still nearer to the golden lamps.

"At the same time, a low wind arose, and went moaning through the passages ; the one by which Rufinus had entered the vault, and another on which his eye now fell, leading out from it on the opposite side. He thought, too, that he could distinguish some confused sounds of laughter, as if the demons who had lured him hither were mocking him, even in sight of the wealth before him.

"What warnings is not a man ready to despise, when they stand in the way of an absorbing passion ? The emeralds of the magic tree glittered enchantingly in the mellow rays of those subterranean lamps. Rufinus fixed his eyes upon the jewels, and started forward once more. His hand tore away a branch.

' Strike here !'

exclaimed a voice of thunder ; and the giants lashed their clubs against the golden lamps, which were extinguished in a moment. Then, in the midst of the darkness, arose such a din of fiendish yell and mocking laughter as might well have driven the listener out of his senses. The wind

increased to the vehemence of a hurricane, and drove Rufinus along before it through the passage he had noticed, that led away from the side by which he had entered the vault.

“ He found himself carried along irresistibly by this raging wind ; but not before he had caught sight of a pale and lurid flame, like that which broods over some stagnant marsh, or hovers above the rotten trunk of a tree in the midnight forest. By the light of this flickering tongue of fire, Rufinus was horror-struck to see the features of the old man, his eyes fixed upon him with the same bitter and fiendish smile or scowl, which had chilled his blood even by the light of day and in upper air.

“ Rufinus, whirled along by the wind, fled at full speed, and against his will, through the dark passage, which seemed to be conducting him into the very bowels of the earth. Was he to be sucked into some subterranean current of air, or hurled down the crevice of an extinct volcano ? He had hardly time or senses to think ; the violence of the wind, the rapid motion, took away his breath. He grew giddy and faint ; while his heart filled with rage at the sudden reverse of fortune which swept from him the wealth so lately within his grasp. *Peal upon peal of the mocking demon-laughter*

followed him as he fled, and drove him to a nameless despair, as one who had been cheated alike of this world and of the world to come.

“ Suddenly he found himself shot out into the open air ; and while his eyes, directed downward, caught the tremulous starlight reflected in a gliding river, he was immersed in the water before he could cry for help, or pray for mercy.”

The Improvisatore paused, and looked around him. Satisfied, apparently, by the interest taken in his tale, he added :

“ In the gray of the next morning’s dawn, some miles below the City, where the yellow Tiber winds its way to Ostia, a fisherman, who was out betimes, discovered the body of a man floating with his face downward. The ghastly corpse still held in its clenched hand a withered myrtle-spray, its berries whitened over with a baleful blight ; and on the throat, deeply impressed, were the black marks of fingers, as though he had been throttled to death. It was Rufinus the treasure-seeker, who in his unlawful search after the riches of time, had grasped at a shadow, given himself to a mocking delusion, and surrendered all prospect of the substantial goods of eternity.”

The renegade paused; a little anxious (for renegades know what an uneasy conscience is) to see whether he had hit the right mark, or had spiced his tale with a grain too much of religion. He had said nothing, however, inconsistent with the religion of Mahomet ; nor anything to condemn avarice and extortion in the upper classes or functionaries. The Pasha therefore condescended to nod his release ; and motioned forward the English sailor, to tell his story about *Air*.

The Sailor's Broken Yarn.

AIR.

'AIR?' said the sailor, as he twirled his hat, and gave a pull at the mainbrace; "why, air, I take it, s all one as a wind. Now, the vi'lentest wind I emember to have weathered, your honour, not to peak of a sudden flaw or so, though *they* be strong enough in the tropics, that's sartin, when the seacurls up to your bows with a foam the size of the nain-sheet, before you rightly know your bearings, und the skipper in his cabin sees the glass go down on a sudden, and tumbles up the companion in a iffy, singing out to the bo's'n to pipe all hands und reef taups'ls—"

Somehow, whether from the sailor's downright nanner, unobservant of the forms of Oriental etiquette, or from the failure of the interpreter to render his meaning intelligible, the Pasha's illumour increased so visibly that both Tunis merchant and renegade trembled for their throats.

The Pasha was stroking his beard in a very ominous manner. In their distress they turned to the Dervish, and in a low voice entreated him to begin at once upon the last remaining topic, *Fire*. Meanwhile, the sailor, unconscious of the offence he was giving, or of the danger in which he and his comrades stood, had delivered himself of a kind of exordium on the uncertain weather of the tropics, and now proceeded to strike into his main narrative, or, as he would have said, to "spin a regular yarn."

"Afore I was pressed, d'ye see, your honour, by a boat's crew of the saucy Ariadne, at Portsea, to sail under a broad pennant with the commodore, I'd been cap'n of the fox'le in a merchn'mn, running Westin'j'n cargoes from S'n Kitt's : so, the last time we made the run, having got well into the trades—"

What further chanced on that voyage will never be recorded ; for the Dervish, seeing how matters stood, came forward at once and broke abruptly, and with some vehemence, into a wild strain, made impressive by his manner, which ran as follows :

The Verbiſh's Warning.

FIRE.

I MUS'D, one livelong night,
Even to tears,
On souls of countless men
Bending with weight of sinful years,
Or in the burst of opening life,
In God's despite
With heavenly promise, heavenly gifts, at strife :
Still forging, link by link, their fatal spell;
Warn'd, while they plung'd to Satan's den !
Yet thronging to the nether hell,
A reckless crowd on that broad way :
Such forms no living eye unshrinking may behold,
Haggard with sin, that wears down young to old :
I saw them plunge from upper day,
Into the surges of a quenchless fire,
Down-trodden heaps in one vast pyre,
Spurn'd by the demons fierce ;
Tempters of old, avengers now,

Who urge of torments dread
The restless wheel ;
Fettering their victims on each torture-bed
Through hell's dim caves, that glow intense
As sevenfold proven steel :
Whose pains, all measureless by lapse or age,
Possess each several sense
With one deep, frenzied, and eternal rage :
While the flame-scourges hissing flash,
A living serpent's hiss at each new gash ;
Through joints and marrow pierce,
And cause the molten brain for aye to reel,
Rouse to fresh anguish every nerve
Through the quick frame, intensely now alive,
Salted with lambent fire, whose darts preserve
The lost, whom their dread pains anneal ;
Who groan to be dissolved, and still survive,
To shame and torment sensitive
Beyond all power of pain in mortal state,
To learn hell's lessons newly, lash by lash :
And learn too late
How dread a thing, by sin to lose
The Good whom yet, while they might choose,
They would not serve,
Would not be won to love,
And now must hate,
Goaded by impulse of that iron fate—

Serve now, nor love, may never,
Must hate, and must blaspheme for ever,
So long as He shall reign in bliss above.

While groaning thus I pray'd,
I seem'd to see
Souls by th' Eternal from all ages lov'd,
Souls that for bliss were made,
In swift succession, downward flee ;
Soul upon soul reprov'd,
And more—yet more,
Dark as the hailstorm, beyond score,
To that untold perdition rushing :
Then gentle wings,
As by a breath of heaven's calmness mov'd
Fann'd the close air from off my brow ;
And soft, like some near river smoothly gushing,
An angel's whisper said :
“ Mortal, I bear thee now
To view those endless things
Of woe and dread !”
Whereon, enfolding me, and fleet as thought—
he strong bird, broad-pinion'd, from some height
A callow nestling bears,
Plumb-down the angel voyager had brought
His breathless freight
Shrinking, aghast with human fears :

And thus we came
Through that grim gate, whose leaves are sheeted
flame;
Where, swollen with the numberless accurst,
Red sulphurous billows heave and roll :
Where agonise, with unslak'd madd'ning thirst,
With shrieks of late remorse,
They on whose rebel heads the wrath delay'd has
burst
And all th' unchained force
Of God's revenge, now loos'd on body and soul—”

Conclusion.

"WHAT'S that?" cried Captain Harris, rising up quickly, and going to the window of the guest-hall. He listened for a moment. "It is, indeed, the sound of wind from this side of the convent. I hear it creaking in the rusty weather-vane. Hallo! the wind's changed. Hark ! I declare, a splash of rain."

The Nabob and the rest had followed him to the window. "Rain, rain ! a warrant for our release. Pack up, ladies and gentlemen ; we shall soon be rolling again over this habitable globe."

Sir Robert's Italian courier showed his sallow face at the door. He came to announce the same welcome tidings. A decided thaw had set in ; there was every prospect of the party being able to move the following day. The peasants, who had been clearing the snow from the most difficult parts of the pass, had also come in, and made a favourable report of their labour.

Pashas, dervishes, renegades, and sailors, all

were forgotten. The one thought was, now, how to secure horses, how to have everything packed, how to be well off before the diligence from Martigny, which would be soon on its way up the pass, should crowd the hospice, and cut off a chance of relays. Whether the Egyptian Viceroy caused the four story-tellers, or any of them, to be bowstrung, or whether the Dervish's warning took effect on him, was now a matter of less consequence than whether the monks could furnish an additional mule or two for the Danish merchant, the Irishman, and the Student. Failing this, the Enshawe party good-humouredly offered all the available room in their carriages to their chance companions, or such of them as were going south. And so, separating to pack up for their several routes through life, they set us, my dear reader, an example which we may as well follow.

THE END.

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